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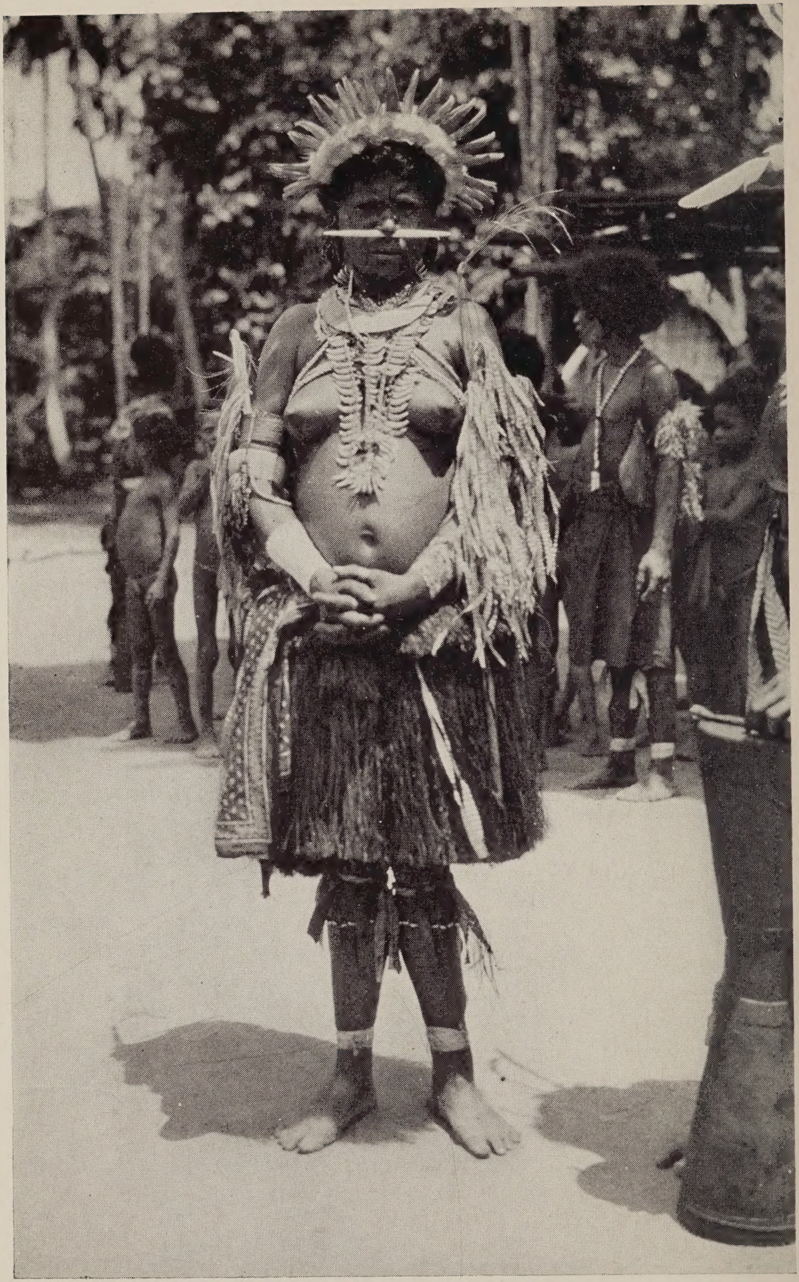

THE STOLEN BRIDE.

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PARADISE QUEST

A NATURALIST'S EXPERIENCES IN NEW GUINEA

by

Lee S. Crandall

CURATOR OF BIRDS, NEW YORK ZOOLOGICAL PARK

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
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FOR

CELIA

TEXT IDENTIFICATIONS

FIRST REFERENCE PAGE	
9.	Pied Butcher Bird. *Cracticus cassicus* (Bodd.).
9.	Black Manucode. *Manucodia ater subalter* R. & H.
10.	Sun Bird. *Cinnyris jugularis flavigastra* (Gould).
10.	Purple Glossy Starling. *Lamprocorax metallicus metallicus* (Temm.) (Mekeo: *Ka-ka*).
12.	Geoffroy Parrot. *Geoffroyus geoffroyi aruensis* (Gray).
12.	White Cockatoo. *Kakatoë galerita triton* (Temm.).
12.	Black Cockatoo. *Probosciger aterrimus goliath* (Kuhl.).
47.	Fawn-breasted Bower Bird. *Alphachlamydera cerviniventris recondita* (Meyer) (Mekeo: *Ka-ká-wa-uh*).
48.	Bonaparte Flycatcher. *Todopsis cyanocephalus bonapartii* Gray (Mekeo: *Li-li*).
54.	Count Raggi's Bird of Paradise. *Paradisæa apoda raggiana Scl.* (Motu: *Ló-co-hu.* Mekeo: *Ó-pu.* Kuni: *Yó-bu.* Mafulu: *Kó-ga*).
66.	Dumont Myna. *Mino dumontii dumontii* Less. Mekeo: *Kao-lao*).
66.	New Guinea Pitta. *Pitta atricapilla atricapilla* Q. & G. (Mekeo: *Kúvvi-kuvvi*).
74.	Magnificent Rifle-bird. *Mathewsiella magnifica intercedens* (Sharpe) (Mekeo: *Pung-ó-wa.* Kuni: *Om-ua-vúa*).
74.	Macklot Pitta. *Pitta macklotii oblita* Rothsch. & Hart. (Kuni: *Kwá-kwa*).
86.	Magnificent Bird of Paradise. *Diphyllodes magnificus hunsteini* Meyer (Kuni: *Ke-ló-lo*).
86.	Lesser Superb Bird of Paradise. *Lophorina superba minor* Ramsey (Kuni: *Ba-gó-da*).
87.	Lawes' Six-plumed Bird of Paradise. *Parotia lawesi lawesi* Ramsey (Kuni: *Al-í-ga*).
87.	New Guinea King Parrakeet. *Alisterus callopterus chloropterus* (Ramsey).
93.	White-throated Pigeon. *Columba vitiensis halmaheira* (Bonap.).
103.	Brown Raven. *Gymnocorvus tristis* (L. & G.).
104.	Wood Swallow. *Artamus maximus* Meyer.
107.	Prince Rudolph's Blue Bird of Paradise. *Paradisornis rudolfi* Finsch (Kuni: *Ma-ní-ka*).
131.	Vulture-headed Parrot. *Psittrichas fulgidus* (Less.).

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132.	Long-tailed Bird of Paradise. *Epimachus fastosus meyeri* Finsch (Kuni: *Er′-ma*).
133.	Horned Manucode. *Phonygammus keraudrenii jamesi* Sharpe.
133.	Blue Manucode. *Manucodia chalybata orientalis* Salvad.
199.	Red-crowned Fruit Pigeon. *Ptilinopus pulchellus pulchellus* (Temm.) (Kuni: *Pu-ní-a*).
199.	Shrike-thrush. *Pitohui dichrous monticola* Roth. (Kuni: *Kói-koi*).
204.	King Bird of Paradise. *Cicinnurus regius claudii* Og.-Grant (Kuni: *Un-a-wal′-la-wal-la*).

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INTRODUCTION

New Guinea is the second largest island in the world, being exceeded in size only by Greenland. Its total area is estimated to be 312,329 square miles; its greatest length is approximately 1,400 miles. New Guinea lies directly north of the eastern half of Australia; from just below the Equator it extends, in a southeasterly direction, to 12° 5′ south latitude. Geographically, it is known also as Papua, which has resulted in a great confusion of names. The western half of the island belongs to the Netherlands and is known as Dutch New Guinea. The eastern half is divided into two portions. The southern division, once called British New Guinea, passed into Australian control in 1906 and was promptly renamed as the Territory of Papua, commonly abbreviated to Papua. The northern section of the eastern half of the island, formerly known as German New Guinea, is now governed by Australia under mandate from the League of Nations. Officially, it is the Territory of New Guinea or the Mandated Territory. Popularly, it is New Guinea. Consequently, the names New Guinea and Papua apply not only to the entire island but, locally, to its divisions. In this book, I have tried to use the term New Guinea for the entire island, and Papua for the Territory of that name.

There are several excellent reasons why zoological exploration in New Guinea has done little more than scratch the surface. Throughout the length of the island runs a backbone of tremendous mountains, reaching an elevation of more than sixteen thousand feet in Dutch territory and over thirteen thousand feet in Papua. Between their towering heights and the coast extend thousands of square miles of almost impenetrable jungles. A few great rivers, such as the Fly and the Sepik, which are navigable by small craft for considerable distances, provide comparatively easy ingress to some sections of the interior. But the huge expanse of country lying between these larger waterways can be traversed only on foot. Food and equipment must be cut to less than necessities, for every ounce means an added burden for the reluctant native carriers, who never can be secured in sufficient numbers. This need of economy is increased by the extreme difficulty of the terrain. In some sections coastal swamps or heavily forested plains must be crossed before the foothills of the great mountain ranges are reached. In others the mountains rise almost directly from the sea. Here the going is of the roughest, up and down sharp, razor-backed ridges, or along their narrow crests.

Tremendous areas have never been trod by foot of white man. Other great stretches have been threaded by intrepid Government officers, who have returned, after months of struggle, to report new mountains, lakes, or rivers. Details await the years.

The native peoples of New Guinea still remain in a very primitive state. The difficulties of communication, sharp distinctions in language, constant inter-tribal warfare involving cannibalism, all have operated to inhibit cultural advance. In some districts, particularly in parts of the Territory of New Guinea, there has been a considerable contact with white men, resulting in an extensive development of complicated "pidgin" English. In the Central Division of the Territory of Papua, where the expedition of the New York Zoological Society worked, even the simple pidgin in use is understood only by occasional coastal natives.

To the ornithologist, the lure of New Guinea lies not in mere exploration but in the glorious birds of paradise which inhabit its tangled jungles. Two skins of the greater bird of paradise, brought by the adventurers of Magellan's voyage around the world, in 1522, are believed to have been the first of these beautiful creatures to reach Europe. Like most native-made skins, even to this day, these specimens were without wings or feet. The unexplained lack of extremities, coupled with the ethereal beauty of the birds' plumage, gave rise to a variety of conjectures of rashly romantic nature. For years it was believed that they "live in the air, always turning toward the sun, and never lighting on the earth until they die, for they have neither feet nor wings." Even as late as 1758, perfect skins were still unknown, and the great Linnæus, quite possibly with his tongue in his cheek, designated the species as *Paradisœa apoda*, the name it bears to-day.

Two lesser birds of paradise, brought to the London Zoo in 1862 by the naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace, were the first of this lovely group to be seen in Europe alive. Since that time living specimens have remained extremely rare and greatly sought. None was seen in America until 1910, when three greater birds of paradise arrived at the New York Zoological Park. By good fortune, we were afterward able to exhibit occasional specimens, but nothing like a proper collection was possible. It became evident that if we wanted birds of paradise we should have to go and get them.

There were grave doubts as to the success of an expedition sent expressly for this purpose. A considerable expenditure of time and money would be involved and the chances for a fair return seemed small. The interior of New Guinea was known to be inaccessible and difficult. All available information concerning the natives was far from encouraging. It seemed probable that we should never reach our projected hunting grounds; that if we did, we should never get the birds, and that if we did get them, they would never survive the more than ten-thousand-mile journey to New York. Considered on a practical basis, the project seemed almost absurd.

Fortunately, a naturalist is not supposed to be practical, and to me the risks were minimized by the possibility of success. I had visualized the expedition for so long that already it seemed an accomplished fact. Gradually, my badgering wore down the solid judgment of the officers of the New York Zoological Society and secured their consent. But I realized that I had talked myself into a slightly grim position. I had insisted I could get the birds. Now I had to do it.

In making final plans, two points were of primary importance. It was necessary to find a place from which the habitats of the greatest number of species of birds of paradise could be reached in the shortest possible time. Also, I knew that it was essential to secure the services of some one with actual field experience in New Guinea. The solutions of both problems were found when John Ward, of Sydney, Australia, replied favorably to a cabled inquiry. Not only was he willing to go but he suggested the Central Division as the district most likely to yield success. The enlistment of Ward proved even more fortunate than I realized at the time. Without his knowledge, dogged courage and powers of endurance, the expedition probably would have had a very different outcome, for to an utter stranger no land is more cruel than the interior of New Guinea.

Sailing from San Francisco in August, 1928, I arrived in Sydney early in September. Ward met me when the *Ventura* docked, and the deft manner in which he guided my varied luggage through a rather finicky Customs immediately established a feeling of confidence in his ability. "Jack" to acquaintances, "Pop" to his friends, Ward was soon "Pop" to me, and so he remains, evidence of the comradeship that quickly developed between us.

No sooner was I installed in the Hotel Metropole than Ward informed me that His Excellency, Sir Hubert Murray, Lieutenant-Governor of the Territory of Papua, was also a guest. Instantly I thought of my half-promised collecting license. Birds of paradise are strictly protected in the British half of New Guinea; permission to take them is granted only to institutions of recognized standing. A brief cabled message from His Excellency had assured us that a license for a small number would be issued, on personal application in Port Moresby, the capital of the Territory. We had proceeded in the hope that when our position had been fully explained some extension of the privilege might be granted. I had expected to make my plea in Port Moresby but could not afford to miss the opportunity which now presented itself.

Stilling my qualms, I used the time-honored means to persuade a reluctant head porter to convey my compliments to His Excellency, with a request for an audience. During the interval of waiting, I felt some squeamish regret for the directness of my approach. After all, the Governor of a British Colony is entitled to some privacy. But just as I reached the depths of self-reproach, I received a kindly invitation to join His Excellency at breakfast. While grilled kidneys and bacon cooled, Sir Hubert scribbled me a pencilled note, freeing the authorities in charge at Port Moresby from the binding terms of his cabled message to New York. Not much, to be sure, yet quite enough. I was overjoyed at the outcome of my rash venture. The whole affair had been a stroke of more than ordinary good fortune, for His Excellency informed me that his visit to Sydney was but the first step of a trip to England, where he expected to spend a six months' holiday. Had I missed him, the terse and formal wording of that cablegram would have proved an insurmountable official obstacle.

Armed with our brief document, Ward and I were anxious to get away. We were somewhat pressed for time, as the Papuan rainy season begins in December, and to be caught by the deluge would be fatal. We must get in and out before this unpleasant period began. There is only one ship plying regularly between Sydney and Port Morseby. This is the *Morinda*, a sturdy little vessel of nineteen hundred tons, sailing once each month. She was due to leave within a few days of my arrival but an unexpected postponement cost us a delay of two precious weeks. At last, however, we were under weigh. After leaving Brisbane, the course lies inside the Great Barrier Reef, and winds its way northward among innumerable tiny islands, perhaps the peaks of a submerged mountain range. Outside Cairns, we passed through an opening in the reef and, after two days of fine sailing across the smooth waters of the Coral Sea, arrived in Port Moresby harbor.

Before proceeding with a further account, there are some acknowledgments I should like to make. To Mr. Madison Grant and Mr. William White Niles, President and Secretary, respectively, of the New York Zoological Society, and to Doctor W. Reid Blair, Director of the New York Zoological Park, I offer gratitude for the opportunity to visit New Guinea and apologies for my persistent harassing. To Sir Hubert Murray, Mr. H. W. Champion, Government Secretary of Papua, and all other Government officials with whom I came in contact, I am deeply indebted for uniformly kind and helpful treatment. Excerpts from articles in the New York *Times*, *Natural History*, and *The Bulletin* of the New York Zoological Society have been reprinted in this book; for their use I extend my thanks to the editors of those publications.

CHAPTER I

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF NEW GUINEA

Standing on the deck of the *Morinda,* I watched the sun rise over rounded hills, with Port Moresby crouching between them. New Guinea had filled my thoughts and dreams for so many years that my first glimpse seemed like a return to a familiar place. Yet I thrilled at the sight of the land that had haunted my mind so long; a land that draws the naturalist with relentless fascination.

It was early October and the end of the dry season had not yet come. The low, bare hills were scorched and brown, and there was no sign of the green luxuriance one expects of the tropics. The town itself looked dusty, hot and uninviting. Yet we were anxious to get ashore, for a long list of items must be checked off before the *Morinda* sailed that night for Yule Island. Most important of all were our collecting permits, for without them we could do nothing.

As we drew alongside the single wharf that accommodates the deep-sea shipping of Port Moresby, I had my first view of New Guinea natives. Dock laborers, they were, gathered from all the districts of the Territory: black, hook-nosed men from the west, slender brown boys from the local villages. All wore frayed and dirty knee-length skirts or *ramis,* the upper portions of their bodies bare. As I watched the muscles ripple under their glistening skins, I was reminded of similar sights in Suva and in Pago-pago. After all, these South Sea natives seemed very much alike.

Eight o'clock saw us ashore, Ward bound for Burns-Philp's store to purchase further supplies, I intent on the office of the Government Secretary. As I went up the main street of the town I still had the vague feeling that I had seen it all before. Indolent native men, in *ramis* of soiled calico, wandered listlessly along the dusty road. A small Ford truck rattled by, a grinning brown boy at the wheel.

Then, at the first corner, I encountered a chattering group of dusky women, dressed only in grass skirts, extending from hip to knee. For the first time I felt I was really out of the tourist zone. The hideous "Mother Hubbard" had clothed the women of other South Sea ports I had visited. A wise Government regulation protects the health as well as the appearance of the Papuan native by prohibiting the wearing of clothing on the upper portion of the body. Exception is made only for Government employees and in a few other very special instances.

At the Government office, I had not long to wait before being received with kindness and sympathy by the Secretary, Mr. H. W. Champion. Relieved from any official restriction by the little note from Sir Hubert Murray, Mr. Champion granted my request for permission to collect a number of birds of paradise sufficient to make the trip worth while—if we could get them!

When I rejoined Ward at Burns-Philp's, I found him re-checking his supply list, to make certain that he had forgotten nothing. Rice, in eighty-pound mats, for our carriers; flour, sealed in tins; stone-hard ship's biscuits; twist trade tobacco, packed in Virginia; a gallon of oil for our cheap tin lantern, masquerading as a "hurricane lamp." It was our last opportunity to secure supplies; if we had forgotten anything we should suffer for it. As a matter of fact, Ward's experience and our weeks of planning had taken care of everything. With our equipment cut to bare necessities—and very few of these!—we always found we had every article we really had to have.

The *Morinda* visits Yule Island, sixty-five miles west of Port Moresby, every second month. Fortunately for our plans, she would go there on this trip. When she sailed that night we were again aboard, our new supplies strongly boxed and snugly stored with the rest of our outfit. I began to feel, now, that we were getting somewhere.

At dawn next morning we dropped anchor in Hall Sound, just off the little dock of the Mission of the Sacred Heart, at the eastern end of Yule Island. It was a fine, clear morning, and two or three miles to the north, across the Sound, we could see the deep green of the mainland. Far beyond, dim in the distance, were the faint outlines of the great mountains of the Main Range, the western extension of the Owen Stanleys. At the left rose the jagged peak of Mount Yule, just over ten thousand feet high. Directly before us came the slender shafts of the Navarre Needles and then, farther east, a dark, rounded eminence, with a deep notch in its western curve. This, Ward told me, was the Gap. I did not know, then, that weeks later I should enter this Gap and gaze down into the lovely valley through which the headwaters of the Angabunga River flow. For this great cut separates the country of the Mafulu people from that of the unsubdued and savage Ambos. The mountains seemed very far away—they are at least fifty miles air-line from the coast—and even as I gazed they were obliterated by gathering clouds.

Now several launch-drawn punts, which had put out from shore in response to the *Morinda's* whistle, were alongside. At last I saw real New Guinea boys, unencumbered by dirty *ramis.* What a difference! With no other clothing than a skimpy gee-string, their lithe brown bodies moved with muscular grace and freedom. I blessed the good sense of Government and Mission. For a savage dressed like a white man gains nothing but loses much.

Presently several came aboard and I learned that they hailed from Chiria, the only native village on the island. Most could speak no English, but one came forward and greeted Ward in understandable pidgin. He knew our purpose without asking and begged to be allowed to come along. Ward, however, seemed to lack enthusiasm, and temporized. Later, when I asked him why he had let slip this opportunity to secure an interpreter, he replied that he had known this man too well before, and that he was a notorious thief and trouble maker. The volunteer failed to press his claim.

Our gear was soon towed ashore in an empty punt, and stored in the Mission shed. Here it was inspected by the Customs Agent who had come up with us from Port Moresby, and the assessed duty paid on the spot. Scientific expeditions are not exempt in Papua!

When these formalities had been completed, we were greeted by Dick Speedie, the young Patrol Officer attached to the Government Station. I looked at him with interest, for the exploits of Papuan Patrol Officers are well known. He was a slight, unassuming chap, with mild blue eyes and no hint of bravado. Yet, as I later learned, his experiences amongst the untamed cannibals of the interior would fill more than one book of wild adventure. Danger is only routine to a Patrol Officer.

With the hospitality of the Australian, wherever he may be found, Speedie insisted that we lunch with him and use his house as our own while we were on the island. This we were glad enough to do. The Government Station, called Kairuku, adjoins the Mission grounds, extending westward along the northern shore of the island. Soon we were seated at a rough table in a grass-thatched house, enjoying a meal of bread and butter, "bullamacow" (tinned corned beef) and tea. I had my first insight into native character by observing the uniformed constable who acted as combination cook and table boy. He was very black—he had been recruited in the west—and very badly frightened. Without doubt, he never before had been required to wait upon white men other than his own *taubada* and his anxiety to carry the thing off well produced perfect rivers of perspiration. If we could have told him that we were interested in food and not in service, the ordeal might have been less trying for him. Yet he stuck to it manfully, in the spirit that is characteristic of the native constable. He cannot always understand the white man's motive, but orders he will carry out, even at the cost of his life. The sketchy table etiquette of a Yule Island bachelor was more terrifying than the most dangerous patrol.

There is no regular means of communication between Yule Island and the mainland, and just how we were to cross with our heavy gear was something of a problem. If no better means appeared, we had planned that I should remain behind, while Ward crossed the Sound in a native canoe to Pinapaka, a little to the northwest. He would then have a long walk to the inland villages, where he was known, and would attempt to recruit carriers. If he got them, he was to march them back to the coast and hope to secure enough canoes to ferry our outfit across.

This scheme would have involved a great loss of time and there was always the possibility that it would not be successful. Consequently, on our return to the Mission store-house after lunch, we were delighted to find there a trader named Hayes, temporarily in charge of the Angabunga Plantation's station, known as Arure, about two miles farther along the north shore of the island. Hayes had a gasoline launch, used for towing copra to Arure from the plantation, about twenty-five miles up the Angabunga River. He was willing to take us up, but the price he asked seemed to us exorbitant. However, after a heated discussion, during which I several times thought Ward and Hayes would come to blows, a bargain was struck. Under the circumstances, almost any price meant a great saving to us. We planned to start the next day.

That night, after supper, we were joined by the Assistant Resident Magistrate, R. W. Grist. Grist is an Englishman, thin, wiry, steel-eyed, who has served the Crown the world over, including a term with the Northwest Mounted Police. It was during that service that he acquired certain characteristic expressions, and a reputation as a two-gun man which followed him to his present post. Grist is the hero of many exploits in Papua and regaled us with thrilling accounts of his experiences. During the evening, I learned that our modest host, Speedie, had just returned from a patrol in the vicinity of Mount Yule. Word had trickled down to Kairuku that a native had been killed and eaten. The district about Mount Yule is not under control, but since it is in the Central Division it comes within the jurisdiction of Kairuku. The suppression of murder and accompanying cannibalism are amongst the self-assumed duties of the Government.

Consequently, Speedie, with a half dozen native constables and a few impressed carriers, was despatched to seize the offenders. To enter a little-known, hostile country, with a handful of police, for the purpose of pursuing unidentified cannibals through the mountain forests, would seem not only ridiculous but even a little pathetic. As a matter of fact, a patrol like Speedie's seldom fails to achieve its purpose. This is largely due, of course, to the indomitable courage of the patrol officers and the native police. But there are certain peculiarities of native custom that greatly simplify matters.

In the first place, the people are afraid of the white officer and perhaps even more so of his men. They are not wanted in the villages and the inhabitants are always anxious to have the party leave. To this end some one, sooner or later, will divulge the names of the hunted men, and where they are to be found. When this information has been obtained, the actual arrest is usually only a matter of time, for because of the hostility of neighboring tribes it is seldom possible for the culprits to leave their own district. Even among their friends they are unwelcome, for their presence means the inevitable arrival of the hated police. Frequently, to rid a village of its undesired visitors, the wretched fugitives are given up to their pursuers. There are numerous instances in which perfectly innocent natives, apparently by their own consent, have been turned over as substitutes for guilty persons who could not be secured.

Speedie had penetrated to the village where the offense had been committed. At first the inhabitants denied all knowledge of a killing, but when they had endured the presence of the party for several days, their spirit broke. They disclosed the names of the four men involved, as well as their hiding place. That night the police party surrounded a house in which the men were sleeping, and arrested three of them. In the darkness and confusion, the fourth managed to escape.

Far from being proud of his gigantic feat, Speedie was much chagrined because this man had eluded him. He declared that, as soon as he had had a short "spell," and had recovered from the attack of malaria that gripped him, he would return to Mount Yule and get this slippery gentleman. Before we left New Guinea he did it, though this time a pitched battle resulted, from which the police were glad to escape with their lives—and their prisoner!

The punishment for murder and cannibalism, where natives only are involved, is not severe. Ordinarily, offenders are sentenced to jail for a period of from six months to two years, and then are returned to their villages. If white men have been the victims, the guilty persons, when apprehended, are hanged. This difference in retribution is one of the few instances in the administration of justice in Papua where a white man stands higher than a native. There are excellent reasons for this. If the country is eventually to be brought entirely under control, the safety of white men must be assured, as far as possible. Any real offense against them must be severely punished.

On the other hand, murder and cannibalism among the natives are largely the result of custom. They must be suppressed, but it is felt that more can be accomplished by gradual breaking down than by meting out severe sentences to people who do not understand the reasons for such punishment.

The jail forms an important part of the Government station at Kairuku. It consists chiefly of a thatched barracks, in which the prisoners sleep. There were about fifty native men under sentence. While there is a general impression amongst white residents in Papua that jail holds no terrors for the native, I am certain its purpose is fully served. For while the condemned were fed and housed far better than they would have been in their own villages, they spent their days in hard labor. Continued work has no part in the philosophy of a male native, and to be compelled to perform it under the vigilant eyes of an armed constable must be particularly galling. Yet the prisoners make very little trouble, for literally over their heads hangs a terrible threat. Their hair may be cut off! No punishment could be a stronger deterrent, for any native would almost rather lose his head than the wiry mop that adorns it.

I was reluctant to see the end of this interesting evening, but in Papua nine o'clock is a very late hour. Speedie's constable, now officiating as house boy, attempted to set up the folding canvas cots Ward and I had brought, but found himself entirely unequal to the mystery of their complicated joints. We had to come to his assistance, and after a lengthy struggle and much deep study managed to get them straightened out and the nets strung up. For while mosquitoes are not too bad on Yule Island, they are still sufficiently numerous to make the use of nets necessary.

Our cots require a word of explanation. They were my own idea, brought from Sydney in spite of Ward's sturdy opposition. He was quite right, of course, in maintaining that cots were out of the question in Papua, at least for an expedition like ours. Every added pound would jeopardize our success, and cots seemed to him a useless luxury. Yet he had finally yielded to my arguments and here they were. We had to leave them behind when we finally left for the mountains, but before we started and after our return we found their comfort more than welcome.

I was aroused at dawn next morning by the songs and calls of many birds—the first Papuan bird chorus I had heard. It consisted chiefly of the flute-like notes of the pied butcher-bird and the cooing of doves, with an occasional thin, piping sound that seemed dimly familiar. At first, I could get no further than the whistle on a peanut-vender's roaster. Suddenly, I knew it for the note of the black manucode, which I had heard many times in the Zoological Park. How strange to listen to it here, in the dawn of a tropic morning! I realized that I had awakened in New Guinea—I was actually in the land of the birds of paradise. Even the crowing of a cock failed to break the spell of that tinny whistle.

After a hasty breakfast we went over to the Mission dock and found Hayes' boat-boys already engaged in loading our gear into the launch. As soon as we had seen everything safely stowed, we returned to Kairuku, had our credentials officially certified by Mr. Grist and set out overland for Arure, Hayes' headquarters, about two miles distant.

Birds are not abundant on Yule Island, but near the Station we saw a beautiful little sun-bird busily working amongst the blossoms of a flowering vine, its metallic blue throat glistening in sharp contrast to its olive-yellow body. Farther along we came upon a party of three or four black manucodes, perhaps two-thirds the size of a crow. They were crow-like in appearance, too, except that their sombrely black plumage was relieved by a rich metallic gloss, heightened about the head and neck, where the feathers are plush-like and crinkly. In spite of their plainness, the manucodes belong to the bird of paradise group and as they were the first of the family I had ever seen in nature, we stopped for some time to watch them. They were moving busily about, from the ground up to no more than twenty feet, apparently searching for insects, as we could see no fruit.

Pied butcher-birds, their black and white plumage flashing, whisked from tree to tree, or whistled their loud, clear notes from the tops of palms. A mob of purple glossy starlings fed in a wild-fig tree, their harsh chattering disclosing their presence long before they could be seen.

As we left the Station clearing, the track led through a dry, grassy waste and finally up a bare steep hill. It was a hard climb in the blazing sun, but the steep descent to Arure was made easier by the welcome shade of the heavy bush that grows on the downward slope. On our arrival, Hayes informed us that high tide would not occur until about two o'clock in the afternoon. The entrance into the Angabunga River, directly opposite Arure, is blocked by a bar of mud and sand, which can be crossed only by vessels that draw no more than three or four feet. When the tide is out, this barrier is almost entirely exposed.

From the veranda of Hayes' bungalow, we were able to check the condition of the river entrance with the aid of field glasses. The slowly rising waters seemed reluctant to cover the bar, and Hayes added to our anxiety by remarking that unless the tide was a very strong one, we should never get over it. Even when the glistening mud had finally disappeared, he remained reluctant, and was only persuaded to make the attempt when I agreed to unload several tins of compact but heavy moving-picture film. I did this with the mental reservation that if any opportunity occurred, I should certainly have it brought up to us later on.

At two o'clock, we set forth across the calm waters of Hall Sound. The motor, under the watchful care of a well-trained native boat-boy, ran with perfect smoothness. We were not long in covering the two miles to the entrance to the river and, amid shouts and excitement, and much churning of mud, managed to get into the river. The tide was still with us and we made excellent progress. The river, at this point, is a hundred yards or more wide, flowing between heavy growths of low nipa palms and dark green mangroves. About five miles from the coast, we reached the end of tide water. The nipa palms and mangroves thinned out and their places were taken by the high bush of drier land.

Birds now became abundant and we spent the remainder of the afternoon in excitedly attempting to identify them as they came within reach of our glasses. Many of them were entirely new to me; others were old acquaintances of zoological garden or museum. The beautiful pink-and-green Geoffroy parrot was the most common; flocks numbering up to twenty birds were almost always in sight. There were many of the common yellow-crested white cockatoos of New Guinea, usually in pairs, and a solitary individual of the great black or palm cockatoo. Lories, fruit pigeons and countless smaller birds flashed their brilliant plumage amongst the dense vegetation. Several times the boat-boys pointed out trees in which hundreds of the globular, hanging nests of the purple glossy starling could be seen, the screaming owners coming and going like bees at a hive.

As the day wore on, the current became more and more swift, sharp turns in the river more frequent, menacing snags more difficult to avoid. There was much talk between Hayes and the boys concerning a whirlpool, evidently a dread spot. Hayes had hoped to pass it before dark, but night came and with it a drenching rain. It became evident that we could not reach our destination and should have to tie up and wait for the return of daylight, since the river was now too dangerous for us to proceed.

Suddenly, there came a chorus of yells from the boat-boys. Orders to stop, start or reverse the engine were shouted in various languages. At first Hayes, in a frenzy of excitement, attempted to take control of the situation but quickly gave up. Apparently resigned to his fate, he let the boys do what they could to save us from the danger that threatened. Finally, even they abandoned the struggle and called for the engine to be shut off. I could hear the rushing of a powerful current and supposed that we were in the clutch of the whirlpool, powerless to help ourselves. Gingerly I lifted the edge of the tarpaulin that had been rigged to keep out some of the rain, and peeked out. I could see nothing. I extended my hand and was amazed when it struck a muddy bank. Taking a flashlight, I crawled up to the roof and found that we were tied fast in a narrow channel, through which the water raced madly. The excitement had died down by now and we learned that the uproar had been due largely to the anxiety of the boys to reach this particular spot for the night and the fear that they might miss it. There was a native banana plantation here and they knew they could find shelter in the hut that had been erected for the temporary use of the owner. The whirlpool had been passed long before without a word. New Guinea boys are like that.

The boys were soon ashore and, with some idea of sharing their shelter, I followed. I did not follow far, however, for I found that the ground was covered with horrible, liver-colored millipedes, at least six inches long. I have always felt a particular aversion for these creatures, and lost no time in scrambling back into the launch. Cramped on the hard, narrow seats, we passed a miserable night, for we could not rig our nets and it seemed as if the rain had driven every mosquito in New Guinea under the shelter of our upper deck.

After an excellent breakfast of tinned sausages and tea, provided by Hayes, we resumed our journey. The sky had cleared, the sun was soon shining brightly and everyone was in excellent spirits. Two or three hours later, the boys brought the launch smartly around a sharp turn and we saw, on the right bank, a flimsy native shelter, surrounded by a crowd of a hundred or more men, women and children. How they had become aware of our approach was difficult to imagine but our arrival was plainly no surprise, for they had brought down hundreds of pounds of copra, in the hope of selling it to Hayes. The instant we set foot ashore, they crowded around him, gesticulating and shouting, leaving Ward and me to our own devices.

And now I had a sharp recurrence of a feeling that had been implanted in my mind long before I left New York. Someone had asked, "What about cannibals?" Cannibals? I knew there were such things. But my thoughts had been of high bush and mountain tops, and the human factor had received scant consideration. The question had focused my attention and brought me down closer to earth. I had lightly replied that I didn't expect to be eaten. I didn't—then. But the casual suggestion took root and I could not dislodge it. No one, probably, really wants to be ladled out of a soup cauldron. I re-read the rather sketchy accounts at hand, with special reference to cannibalism. Yes, it was only too true—the natives of Papua undoubtedly were addicted to this unpleasant custom and strangers were their natural prey. My hasty statement on the cannibal question might require qualifying.

The native wharf laborers at Port Moresby and Yule Island had seemed no more alarming than did our own launch boys. If these men were cannibals, I had little to fear. But as I watched the crowd of nearly naked savages surrounding Hayes, I recalled the hair-raising stories told by Grist and Speedie. My confidence began to sag.

The mob paid not the slightest attention to us. A native cannot fix his mind on more than one thing at a time. The particular thing of the moment was dried coconut meat, and to this the crowd devoted itself with an enthusiasm and vociferation that was deafening. The din continued for half an hour, when the launch, loaded to its slender gunwales with copra, finally cast off. I did not like to see Hayes go, leaving us unprotected among these people who were, quite obviously, cannibals. I looked about uneasily.

The men wore nothing more than the narrow gee-string or *sihi*. Great mops of wiry hair stood out about their heads. The women wore grass *ramis,* extending from their

A CHIEF OF JESUBAIBOA.

FIRST CONTACT WITH UNCIVILIZED NATIVES.

BIRD COLLECTION RESTING AT INAWAIA.

NATIVE VILLAGE OF INAWAIA, MEKEO DISTRICT.

hips scarcely half way to their knees. They did not resemble the South Sea belles of fiction. Their hair was clipped close to their unlovely heads. Large, flat feet and various other parts of their persons showed a parti-colored effect which, on closer examination, proved to be caused by plain dried mud. The general impression was not encouraging.

But another shock awaited me in the arrival of a party of young men, whom I came to recognize, later on, as *dubu* boys. Their lithe, muscular bodies were a shining mahogany red, an effect produced by the liberal application of coconut oil and coloring matter. Their bushy heads were adorned with feather ornaments, or with a single large, cream-colored hibiscus blossom, which harmonized perfectly with their general color scheme. Arms and legs were encircled with bands of woven grasses, and in them were inserted the pale green, scented leaves of coleus and croton, which they carefully cultivate for the purpose. Waists were drawn to wasp-like dimensions with tight belts, which are the *dubu* boy's insignia—if there was a considerable bulge above and below it, what matter?

Heavy strings of dogs' teeth, beads, shells and what-nots hung about their necks. Each face was painted in an intricate and amazing pattern of red, yellow and black, no two alike. I was startled by the wild beauty of these boys and at the same time thoroughly depressed. I knew that *dubu* boys make up the bulk of the carriers without whom travel in Papua is impossible. I could not believe that these exquisites would ever deign to shoulder our bulky packages or that, if by some miracle they should do so, I could ever feel comfortable in their presence.

The excitement of barter had now died down and the crowd was beginning to realize that the launch had departed without us. An old man with a circular piece of wood inserted in the lobe of each ear, and with his face expanded in one vast grin, came forward and greeted Ward as the mad *taubada* who gave valuable beads and mirrors, perhaps even shillings, for birds that were to be had for the catching. He was introduced to me as a chief of Jesubaiboa, a nearby village. My vacillating spirits rose again. Success was assured. This pleasant savage was our friend and these gay young blades should be brought to terms. I did not know then that the Papuan greets his friend as such and commits himself to nothing; that the authority of a chief is limited and ordinarily does not include the procuring of carriers.

A considerable crowd had now gathered about us and several of the older men extended the hand of welcome. There was a commotion in the circle and a tall, well-knit native, clad in the blue *rami* of the police, shouldered his way to where we stood. His eyes were heavy and bloodshot, his lips and chin were red with the juice of the betel nut. He shook hands calmly with Ward and me, and I was much impressed to learn that he was no other than Opu Kaki, a former bird boy of Ward's, of whom I had heard much. Ward was disgusted to find Opu not quite himself but even more outraged with the forthcoming explanation of the blue *rami.* Opu had accepted the mantle of the Government and was now village constable of Jesubaiboa. We were disappointed to find that Opu was no longer available for employment, as Ward had counted on his services as head boy. However, since the chief function of the village constable is to receive curses, Ward proceeded, in the pointed and colorful expletives invariably adopted by the white man in New Guinea, to explain that we wished our gear carried to Inawaia, about four miles distant. Opu understood English perfectly well but already he had acquired the curious ineffectiveness that seems typical of the village constable. He seemed reluctant to transmit our request. However, after much repetition and many variations of the usual threat to see that Opu lost his job, our boxes, bales and bags were finally shouldered and started on their way. A tremendous string of men, boys and even women was required for the task. After leaving the landing, the track runs almost due south, along the river, for a few hundred yards, and then turns inland, toward the southeast. For the most part, it is bordered by really tremendous banana plantations, belonging to Jesubaiboa. After about two miles of alternating gardens and open grass country, we came suddenly into the village. It was the first I had seen but I was too much excited to get more than a vague impression.

As we passed through, I had only the sense of a great, open central space, with long rows of well-built thatched houses on each side. A few elderly people and young children peered out as we passed but there was no general excitement. The village dogs skulked beneath the houses but there was none of the barking and uproar heard in native communities in other lands, for the domestic dog of Papua does not bark. Later on, however, we learned that this is no handicap, for surely he can out-howl any rivals the canine world can produce.

Beyond Jesubaiboa there are no gardens, and for another two miles we followed the flat, dusty track through tall saw grass and scattered bits of bush. Presently, we sighted what appeared to be a great grove of towering palms, and soon found that they surrounded the village of Inawaia, our destination.

CHAPTER II

MEKEO

The first building we encountered as we entered Inawaia was a tiny rest-house, intended for the shelter of occasional passing patrol officers. Across the street was a dilapidated police boys' house. We found our gear in great confusion, divided between the two houses or even in the street, surrounded by grinning natives waiting to be paid for their services.

Now came one of those mad scenes which I later learned to accept as a matter of course. The proper payment for the short carry from the landing to Inawaia is two sticks of tobacco. But when we had lined up those who had carried and attempted to pay them off there was an immediate uproar. Everyone demanded a shilling and would take nothing less. This, of course, was outrageous, and Ward, with the Englishman's hatred of being done, told them, picturesquely, what he thought of it. A terrific argument ensued, the sound of which must have alarmed the bush for miles around. The natives shouted and gesticulated wildly, but always Ward's voice could be heard above the din. I was thoroughly alarmed by this time, for I had not recovered from the unpleasant shock of my first contact and was convinced that we were in for real trouble.

I mildly suggested that we might compromise on sixpence each. Ward would not listen at first but finally agreed to it, as the only apparent means for settling the matter. Through Opu Kaki we offered to settle on these terms. Curiously, when money is mentioned in this district, it is always in terms of shillings, and the sixpence has no standing whatever, the people not appearing to realize that two make a shilling. Perhaps it is a matter of comparative size, for I later met a native who had three copper pennies which he regarded as a fortune. At any rate, the offer of sixpence was not well received, but as there seemed to be no hope of doing better, the carriers finally gave in and accepted a "sissipenny" all around.

Before the crowd dispersed Ward explained, through Opu, that the next day we should require a good string of carriers to take us to Inawaibui, a village eight miles farther toward the southeast, and thence into the mountains. Practically all the boys present agreed to come and left us in apparent good humor. However, the disagreement really had been of a more serious character than is usual, and we later suffered from its effects.

After most of the crowd had departed a man who had not been amongst them came flying up the track from Jesubaiboa. He greeted Ward effusively and was then introduced to me as Koi. My first impression of Koi was far from favorable. His countenance seemed to me particularly evil and a heavy cast over one eye carried out the general effect. I was horrified when Koi, in understandable pidgin, offered his services as cooky-boy. I listened in a daze while Ward accepted and a wage of ten shillings a month was calmly agreed upon. I had hoped that our first retainer would be one in whom I could have confidence and who would act as a buffer in any dealings that might be necessary with these alarming people.

Koi, however, appeared delighted with his bargain and promptly set to work, bullying the few idlers who remained into carrying our outfit into one or other of the two houses as we directed. We found the rest-house quite comfortable. It was raised about eight feet from the ground, on piles of palm logs. Floor and walls were built of split palm trunks, with plenty of chinks for ventilation, and the roof was excellently thatched with the leaves of the same tree. A veranda extended along the front and closely attached was a tiny cook-house, equipped with a mound of earth which served as a stove.

Koi quickly mastered the mysteries of construction peculiar to our cots and in no time had them set up and the mosquito nets rigged. He then produced a billy-can of black, man's-strength tea, the brewing of which I soon found was his chief claim to the title of cooky-boy. From some unknown source he brought forth boiled sweet potatoes which, with a tin of bullamacow, made up most of our meals. Hunger really is a sauce of unequalled merit. Without it the awfulness of tinned corned beef, eaten daily, would be a tragedy in itself. The New Guinea sweet potato is encountered in endless variety, but it is almost always tasteless and of a clammy, moist consistency. Yet during our stay in Papua we must have consumed bushels and I cannot remember feeling the repulsion these unpleasant vegetables should have aroused.

I found my cot particularly pleasant that night and took occasion to rag Ward for his unwillingness to bring them. Nor was I impressed when he accused me of softness. No doubt I was soft, but the little cot seemed to me to possess a similar quality, which made matters more than even.

According to New Guinea custom, Koi appeared at dawn and provided us with cold potatoes left from the night before, which we washed down with a billy of tea. To the many American followers of stories of the Australian bush the "billy-can" is a symbol of romance. Very few, I am sure, have the faintest idea of what it may be. I hesitate to destroy this illusion, but for the sake of accuracy feel compelled to say that it is no more than a tin or enamelled pail with a cover! No doubt I shall merit condemnation as a destroyer of idols, but while I am in destructive mood I might as well be doubly cursed, and go on to say that the mysterious "pannikin," quaint utensil of the black-bearded bush-ranger, is only a straight-sided tin cup, holding about a pint!

We had hoped to go on that day to Inawaibui but found the sorting and arranging of our gear a greater task than we had anticipated. Too much of it was improperly packed and all must be arranged to form two-boy loads of not more than fifty or sixty pounds. We had brought twenty cages or bird-boxes, previously constructed by Ward, measuring about three feet by two, and a foot high. For the trip to the mountains we felt that eight would be as many as we could take and the remainder, with various other heavy articles, we stacked on the broad, rickety veranda of the police house across the way. There was no village constable in Inawaia, the last incumbent having recently died. However, three of the older men had been appointed as "councillors," and to the most intelligent of these, one Keaki, we intrusted the care of our goods. In justice to Keaki, I should say that, on our return, we found everything as we had left it.

In a tall grove of palms behind the village the Mission has a station, in care of Father Branzer. Since the bulk of our tinned food, flour and rice, as well as spare cameras, could not be taken with us, we imposed on the kindness of Father Branzer to the extent of the loan of a small storehouse for the safekeeping of these extra supplies. Bird-cages have no part in the native economy and we knew they would be quite safe on the veranda. Food, particularly white man's food, is another matter and must be placed under lock and key.

When these arrangements had been made I took advantage of my first opportunity to inspect the village and its inhabitants. After our return from the mountains we spent several weeks in Inawaia and its vicinity, so that I had an opportunity to observe much that otherwise I should have been unable to learn.

The Mekeo District lies on practically level land, mostly along the Angabunga River, in the Central Division. Its native population seems to represent the result of a migration or series of migrations, probably in prehistoric times, of Melanesian peoples from the islands to the east, imposed upon a more purely Papuan stock already established in New Guinea. This Melanesian influx appears to have affected all of the peoples of southern Papua, from Cape Possession to the eastern end of the island, and extending, in places, well into the great mountains of the interior. The tribes representing the western extension of this influence have been designated by Doctor Seligmann* as the Western Papuo-Melanesians, and it is to this group that the people of Mekeo belong.

The languages of all of these peoples seem to have had a Melanesian origin, but many variations have sprung up. This is so much the case that very often the inhabitants of neighboring villages will speak different languages. The speech of Mekeo seemed to me appallingly difficult, and I never made much progress with it. However, this may have been due, in part, to the lack of necessity, for most of the men and older boys of the district are able to speak Motu, which has become a sort of Papuan Esperanto. It also is a Melanesian tongue, spoken by the natives of the Port Moresby area. For many years the people of the Port Moresby villages have made annual trading expeditions to the west, loading their great, picturesque sailing canoes or *lakatoi* with the pottery for which they are fa-

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*Seligmann, C. G., *The Melanesians of British New Guinea*, p. 2.

mous and exchanging them for the produce of the western tribes. This contact, no doubt, encouraged the spread of their language. Also, since Port Moresby represents the seat of both government and trading activities, Motu is the language with which the visiting white man is likely to come first in contact. When he has learned a few words he sticks to them with grim determination.

I soon found that a small number of easily acquired words would meet most of the conversational necessities. In localities where the Mission schools have been in existence for some time many of the younger boys understand a few words of English, although for some reason they are reluctant to admit it. Consequently, when my little fund of Motu had run out, it was necessary to fall back on the linguistic skill of Koi.

This necessity forced me, somewhat reluctantly, I must admit, to cultivate a closer acquaintance with Koi. I quickly realized that my feelings of alarm were entirely without foundation, for he was as mild and harmless an individual as could be found anywhere, and he soon became my trusted friend and chief source of information. Koi was a lazy rogue, whose greatest abilities lay in the fields of sleeping and eating, yet his loyalty and devotion later helped me out of many precarious situations.

Some years before, when Koi was no more than fifteen, Ward had found him employed as dishwasher in the Mission on Yule Island. He had expressed a wish to join Ward and had been taken on as cooky-boy, since he laid claim to great skill in this direction. As a matter of fact, Koi was undoubtedly the world's worst cook. At anything more complicated than making tea or boiling sweet potatoes he was quite hopeless.

Oven-baked bread, of course, is out of the question in the bush, and even the ash-baked Australian damper requires more attention than we could give it. Ward had hit on a substitute, known to him as a "johnny-cake," made from flour, baking powder and salt, mixed to a proper consistency with water. Grease is another commodity unobtainable in the hinterland but Ward had provided for this by bringing along a small tin of "drippings" from Port Moresby. When the sickly batter has been sufficiently fried in a pan of hot drippings, it takes on the appearance of a very fat, badly burned griddle-cake. When cold, the johnny-cake is particularly repulsive, yet we made and ate them with avidity, as long as the drippings held out.

The making of johnny-cakes was a matter of complete mystery to Koi. Try as he would, he could not master the difficulties of mixing, and either Ward or I had always to prepare the batter. The actual work of frying Koi could manage, after a fashion, but even then constant supervision was necessary. He always held the frying pan on a slant, so that the melted drippings ran to one side. When the cakes began to burn, Koi would try to poke them down into the grease, and during the entire time we were in Papua, we never succeeded in teaching him that if he would only hold the pan level, he would have no difficulty. He always seemed to feel that the trouble was caused by the spiteful action of the "gleetz," which refused to stay where it belonged.

Koi suffered from even more serious trials than the unfriendly conduct of "gleetz." There were many things I wanted to know, and because of my limited vocabulary my inquiries were directed almost altogether to him. Primitive people, the world over, resent constant questioning. They are reluctant to disclose customs, because they fear both ridicule and rebuke. But the chief cause is dislike of the unaccustomed mental effort necessary in first understanding the question, clumsily put in a halting mixture of native words and pidgin English, and in making a reply in a similar hodgepodge. Koi's patience was easily exhausted and he would often seek to escape, exclaiming, "Oh, *taubada*, you too muchy talk—me no wanna talk!" Often, no doubt, in native fashion, he put me off with replies that skirted the truth. Yet his reluctance was equalled by my persistence and usually I succeeded in getting satisfactory replies to my questions.

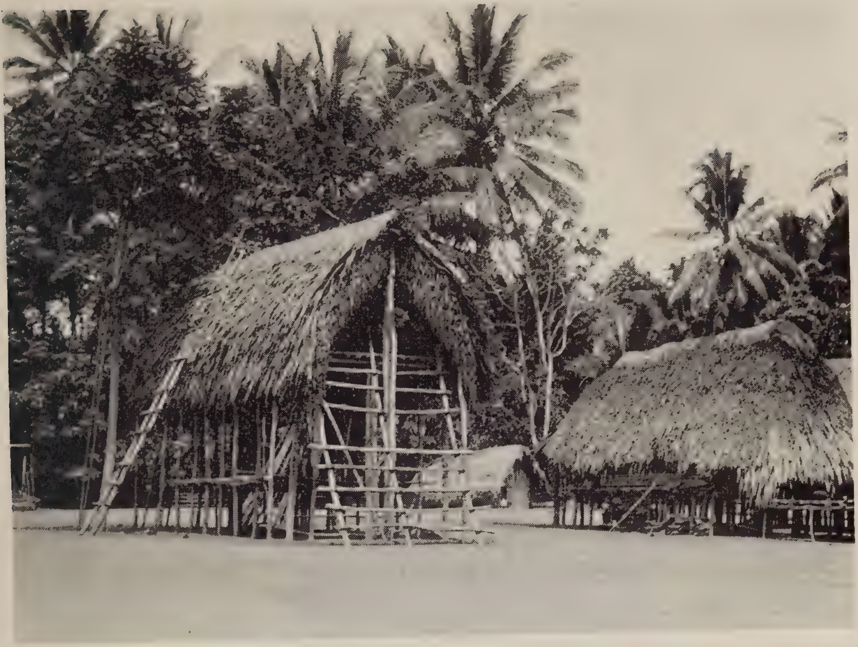
At every turn, I saw evidences of customs of the deepest interest, and in answer to almost every question, Koi gave me leads which I tried hard to follow. The natives of New Guinea are commonly said to be still in the Stone Age. Whether or not this is true, they certainly are in *a* stone age, for they work only in that material. Several workable metals have been found in New Guinea, but native culture has not yet reached the point where these have been put to use. Even in Mekeo, stone clubs and adzes are still occasionally seen, although for the most part they have been replaced by trade articles of steel. In the more remote mountain districts, where trade goods are difficult to obtain, the clumsy stone implements are still in common use.

Culturally, therefore, the Papuan is still in a very primitive state, and a study of his customs should reveal the beginnings of many of our own ways and perhaps help to a better understanding of them. Mentally and physically, the Papuan is well ahead of his culture—in other words, he has the potential ability to advance far beyond his present state. He has a fine skull, with a brain capacity as great as that of the average European. It seems evident that lack of contact with more advanced races has held him back, for once his native reluctance has been overcome, he is able to absorb knowledge that supposedly should be beyond a Stone Age man. In Port Moresby, natives readily learn to operate motor cars and even to become fairly efficient at repairs. There are many native clerks in Government and private service—there is a story of one Port Moresby boy who became so proficient in signing his employer's name that he was sentenced to jail for forgery!

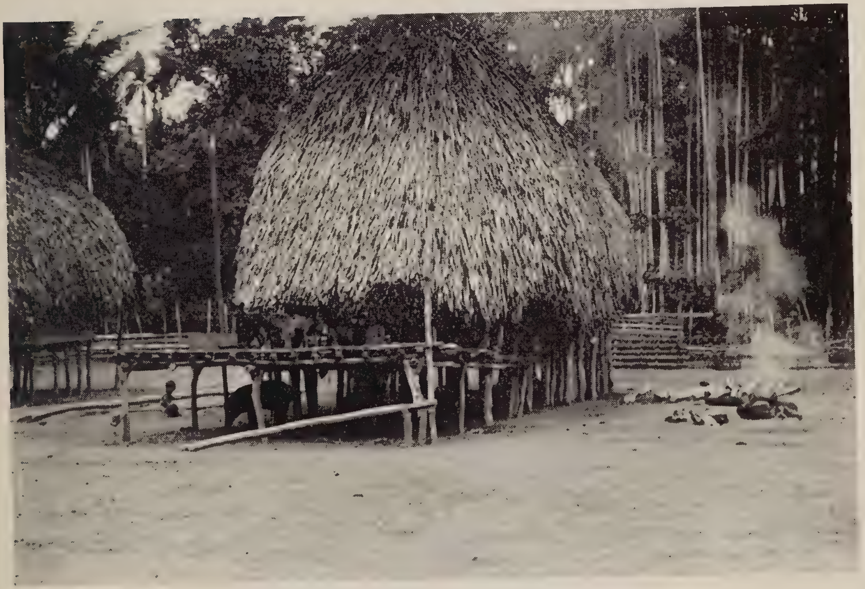
In Mekeo, of course, opportunities for learning are meagre, and while the influence of the Government and the Missions has brought about some changes for the better, one finds life in the villages very much as it was before the coming of the white man. Inawaia is typical of the district. The village occupies a space probably a quarter of a mile long and two hundred yards wide, in which the exposed earth has been packed hard by generations of large, bare feet. The houses are built in a double row, about twenty on each side, facing each other across the single, broad street. Floors are made of split palm trunks, and the walls of the same material, usually set perpendicularly, the roofs being heavily thatched with palm leaves and grasses.

While there are no windows and the doorways are very small, the construction is much better than would be expected of primitive people. All the houses are raised from four to eight feet from the ground, with a rough, open platform in front. Access is gained by means of flimsy ladders. The elevation of the houses serves at least two purposes—to keep out pigs and to avoid the water which may amount almost to a flood during the rainy season. There is also the advantage of ready disposal of edible refuse, which is simply dropped through the chinks in the floor, to be devoured by the eager pigs that wait below.

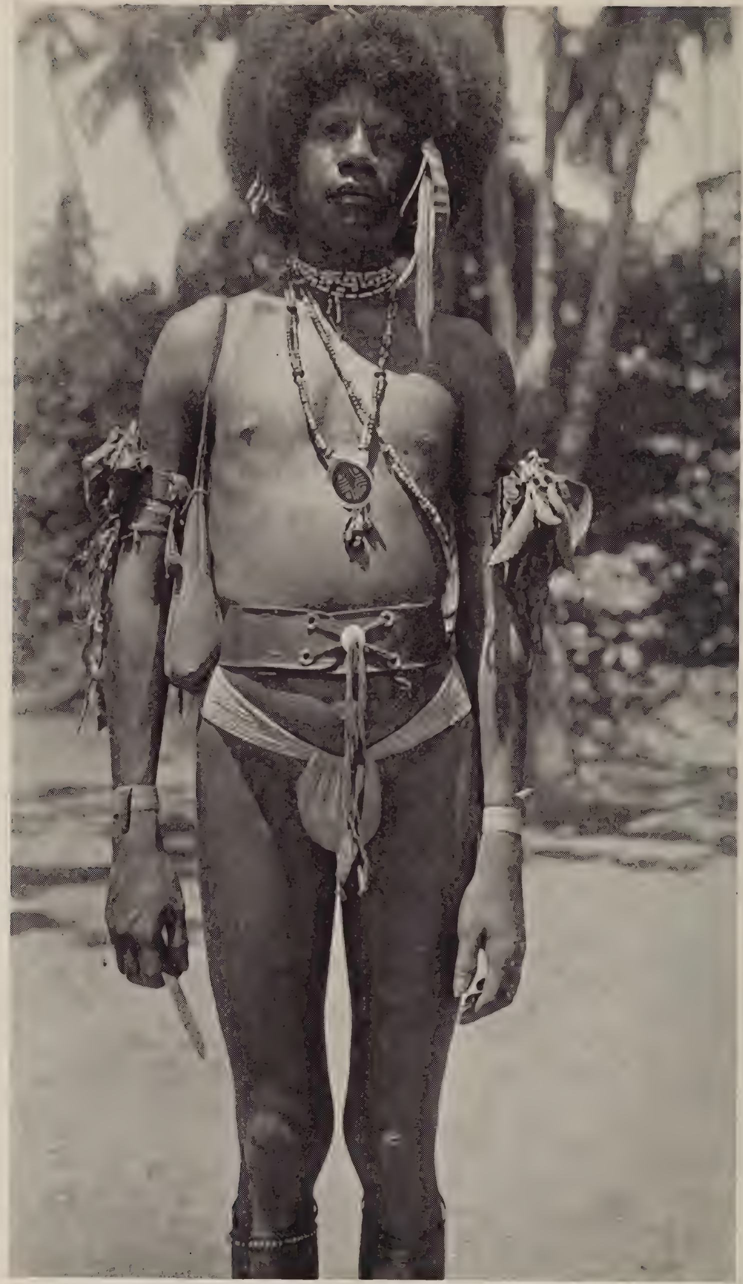
There is usually no subdivision into rooms nor anything by way of a bed. The inhabitants sleep on the bare poles of the floor, enveloped in such trade blankets or bits of



MEN'S HOUSE, INAWAIA.



FAMILY DWELLING HOUSE, INAWAIA.



DUBU BOY, MEKEO.

tapa cloth as they may have, and with a piece of wood for a pillow. A few extraordinarily wealthy and enlightened individuals are said to possess proper mosquito nets, though I must confess I never saw one. They do, however, make fairly serviceable nets from the shredded coverings of palm shoots. Koi informed me that when he was enjoying the comforts of his own home, it was his habit, along with his wife and several small children, to retire, at night, to the protection of such a net. He found this, he said, somewhat crowded at times, and it was his ambition to secure a net such as enclosed our two-by-six cots, under which he felt certain all would be quite comfortable.

Very small and peculiarly knotty hammocks, woven of bark rope, are sometimes used by Mekeo people, though I think they have acquired the idea from the mountains, where hammocks are in common use. In Mekeo, the hammock appears to be regarded as something of a luxury. One old man, whom we knew as Blabbermouth, and who was head of a household diagonally across from us in Inawaia, spent most of his abundant spare time slumbering peacefully in a hammock beneath his house.

Blabbermouth's name was derived not only from the generous proportions of his oral cavity, but from the freedom with which he used it in vocal expression. Each evening, refreshed by his supper and long dallying in his hammock, Blabbermouth held forth in argumentative tones that could be heard at the far end of the village. It appeared that someone had been prowling about the family garden and was suspected of sampling its produce. Occasionally a man or woman, well removed by distance, would be stung into reply. Blabbermouth, however, would easily talk his opponent down, with plenty to spare.

On one occasion, the old man was particularly voluble, haranguing the village until far into the night, so that we were unable to sleep. Something had to be done about it and in the morning I got Koi to pry the story out of young Okoa. Blabbermouth, it seemed, planned an absence from the village, and would be gone for two or three days. The burden of his bellowed refrain was that, while he was away, no one was to steal from his garden. Above all, no one was to interfere with his wife. He never bothered other men's wives while they were away; no decent man would do such a thing; but if he did, a dreadful penalty would be exacted. Blabbermouth's wife probably never had been particularly attractive; now, as a withered grandmother, she certainly was no beauty. I thought there might have been some mistake about this, and that the old man had the sanctity of his married daughters in mind. But Koi was firm in his assertion that Blabbermouth was worried about his wife.

Blabbermouth's oration is a fitting comment on native morals. These, in fact, are on a fairly high plane, at least among married people. But the sex convention is not that of civilized races, presumably based on ethics and religious teaching. It is the morality of the Stone Age: the Old Man laying down the law to protect his property and to maintain his rights. After all, have we advanced much farther? Any digression is punishable by the death of one or both culprits. Old Blabbermouth, no longer of fighting age, would probably confine himself to threats; younger men found words unnecessary. Women and pigs cause most of the tribal wars of New Guinea.

Ordinarily, there is no communal living in Mekeo, such as is found in other parts of New Guinea. Each house is occupied by a single family, though this may include aged parents, temporarily bereaved relatives and so forth. It is not always easy, however, to learn the exact status of all the inhabitants of any given house. For instance, Blabbermouth's family consisted of himself, his wife, two grown married daughters, a younger girl, and a son, a youth of thirteen or fourteen years, not yet taken into a *dubu.* The husband of one of the daughters never appeared—whether he had died, was merely absent for some reason or other, or had divorced her by the simple process of sending her back to her parents, I never learned.

Blabbermouth's second daughter had a young baby, perhaps two or three months old, and her husband had been relegated to one of the men's houses, which was just next door to us. There are always several such houses in each of the larger villages, quite distinct from the *dubus* of the young boys and unmarried men. They are used by married men separated from their families, by widowers and by visiting men. In Mekeo, on the birth of a child, the father leaves his own home and lives in the men's house, presumably during the period of lactation. Koi, however, told me that the father remains there for six months, and mothers certainly nurse their children much longer than that—often abnormally so, it seemed to me. Perhaps Koi's idea of six months was somewhat hazy.

Each evening, when the principal meal of the day had been prepared, Blabbermouth's daughter, her back as straight as a ramrod, would march across the street to the men's house, holding before her a bowl of boiled sweet potatoes, like a votary approaching a shrine. In almost ceremonial fashion, she would deposit this on the platform and leave immediately, though not without a backward glance to assure herself that her husband, and not the dogs, would reach it first.

During the several weeks we lived in Inawaia, I saw husband and wife notice each other on only one occasion. The baby had been crying incessantly all morning, apparently in pain. Toward noon, its mother must have become frightened over its condition, for she came flying across to the men's house, holding the child in her extended arms. Her husband was sunning himself on the platform, but managed to arouse himself sufficiently to receive his shrieking offspring. He held the infant across his thighs, face down, and slapped it vigorously on the back. This evidently did not produce the desired result, for he sat the child upright, and taking a mouthful of water from a gourd, blew it over the child's face, like a Chinese laundryman. The small patient instantly went into a convulsion, its head thrown back, body and limbs stiffly extended. I supposed, of course, that this was the end, and went back to my work, thinking melancholy thoughts on the uncertainty of life in this savage land. However, the usual outburst of grief did not take place that night, and next morning I saw the mother calmly nursing her baby, before she left for her garden.

The segregation of unmarried boys, probably customary throughout New Guinea, is practised in Mekeo, as well as in the mountains to the north of it. As soon as the youth reaches manhood—usually at about fourteen—he enters the boys' house or *dubu* (really *ufu* in the language of Mekeo). Here, until he marries, he lives in company with other single boys. Now, in theory, he supports himself in manly independence, sturdily pursuing the wallaby and the cassowary through the tangled bush, or searching for luscious fruits and berries, known only to experienced initiates in woodcraft. Actually, he seldom does anything of the sort and could no more support himself than a babe in arms. He spends the day hanging about the *dubu*, chewing betel nut, lime and pepper.

If he is not too tired, he may creep out at the back—custom forbids him to walk the central street by day—and enter the bush by a devious path. Here he will cause his small brother to ascend a convenient palm and toss down a coconut or two, so that the pleasant milk may assuage the thirst caused by his exertions. On occasion, arrayed in all his finery, he haunts the bush in the vicinity of the village gardens and slaps his bare thigh to attract the attention of some girl who has caught his fancy. There is always a chance, however slim, that she may elude the female relative who is bound to be at hand, and join her admirer for a moment's love-making.

But even this pleasant pastime will not prevent his being at hand when the women of the village return from the gardens in the evening, bearing their unbelievable loads of bananas, sweet potatoes and taro. For it is then that the village fires are lighted and the one real meal of the day is cooked and eaten. Not that the youth would admit an interest in food—he is supposed to be replete with the spoils of the chase. It is a pretty conceit, in which everyone joins with great solemnity. Its object is to convince the marriageable girls that the young man in question eats so very little that practically no work in the garden would be required to feed him. The Mekeo people are excellent gardeners and are blessed with fertile, stoneless soil for their great plantations. Most of the work, except for the initial clearing of the bush, is done by the women. Hence the tightness of the young buck's belt. He loosens or removes it forever when he marries.

It just happens, therefore, that when, at dusk, his mother or sister approaches the *dubu* platform—no woman may enter the house—and deposits thereon a huge bowl of food, the young man is at home. The donor speaks no word and makes no sign. She leaves her gift and departs. But hardly has she turned her back when our slim-waisted gallant nips out, seizes his prey and nips back again with an agility surprising in one who has no liking for food. Using a ladle made from a chip of wood or the stiff, slender central fibre of a palm leaf as a fork, he falls to and never slacks until he has wolfed the lot.

The amount of food that can be engulfed by a Papuan native can be credited only by an eye witness. Often, on the march, I have seen him devour a mound of sticky, starchy, unsalted boiled rice that would ruin the digestion of the members of any white family, for at least a week. But if any bulging is to be done, there is no co-operation from the belt, which rigidly conforms to the tradition that placed it where it is.

It is customary for each boy to have a favorite companion, from whom he is inseparable, and without whom he is unwilling to go far from his village. A particularly intelligent youth of about eighteen, named Okoa, who later became one of our bird boys, lived in a small *dubu* set behind the houses, half way up one side of the village. Okoa's chum was a lad named Aya, who later succeeded Okoa as bird boy, and proved to be even brighter mentally. These two lads appeared to have a deep affection for each other, and before their engagement with us were often to be seen strolling about, their arms around each other's necks. A deeper bond than friendship seemed to exist between Okoa, Aya, and the four or five other boys who shared their house. There was evidence of a feeling of rivalry toward other groups.

There were several *dubus* in Inawaia and the method of determining which one a boy was to enter puzzled me for a long time. I finally learned that most of the Mekeo villages are composed of the members of from two to five clans, which form distinct groups within the settlement. Each clan has its own *dubu,* often more than one, and of course each boy is assigned to a place with his own clan.

This division into clans probably has much to do with the apparent lack of authority of the chiefs, a condition which has caused the Government much annoyance in dealing with the natives. The point is that each clan has its own head, who has a considerable amount of influence over his own people, but has nothing to do with other groups. In the mountain districts, communities are often divided into small villages, the inhabitants of which are members of a single clan. Here authority is more definite, for the clan chief may rule the entire village. The clan, and not the village, is the unit from the Papuan point of view, so that where four or five clans are living together, each with its own chief, there is no one to rule the entire village.

The Government has devised an ingenious method for getting around this difficulty. In all of the villages which are under control, a single individual, usually for no particular reason, has been designated as village constable. Generally, he is not a chief, nor any other dignitary. Very often, he has served a term in jail for what, to him, was a minor offense. This contact is a great advantage, for he has learned something about the power of the white man, knows that his intentions are good and may even have learned a few words of English. The fact that he has been a prisoner does not affect his social standing in his village, which of course has no traditions in such matters. Nor is his elevation to a position of authority resented, for custom has not provided a head for the entire village and no one has to be deposed.

Before going to New Guinea, I had read of the village constable, and thought of him as the one bright spot in dealing with savage and unfriendly natives. But I was quickly disillusioned for, from the visitor's viewpoint, this official almost invariably appears to be the least efficient and the most helpless individual in the village he is supposed to control. He is an inveterate beggar of tobacco. He freely promises abundant food and many carriers, which, in the end, he is unable or unwilling to produce. But there are mitigating circumstances, for the unfortunate man is invariably detested by his constituents, with whom he has to live. If he presses them to keep their village clean, and roads and bridges in repair, he increases their animosity. If he drags forth unwilling carriers, on demand, he becomes practically a marked man. On the other hand, he enjoys the prestige of his position and is anxious to hold it. If too many stories of his inefficiency reach the ears of the Government, he knows he will lose it. Consequently, an experienced village constable is a person of great diplomatic craft. Threats and cajolery, in the final analysis, will usually bring him to terms; bribes he accepts gladly, without allowing them to influence his plan of action.

Toward officials of the Government, usually in the persons of patrol officers, the village constable takes the stand of unquestioning loyalty typical of the Papuan. An officer on a difficult or dangerous mission may collect the constables of several villages, through which he passes, to join his force, and on such occasions these men have frequently conducted themselves with reckless bravery. At times, they may perform feats that are almost incredible, when the native's reluctance to leave his own district is considered. Sir Hubert Murray* records the following example:

"Some of them are men of considerable courage and determination, as, for instance, Angi Angi, of Amo Amo Piofa, in the Mekeo District. This man had heard that a murder had been committed at Okaipu, several days' distance from his home and beyond the limits of Government influence, and went there with one companion and arrested the two ring-leaders. But on the way to the Government station the men escaped; so Angi Angi went back again to Okaipu, rearrested the escapees, and lodged them safely in the jail at Kairuku." And this without arms, beyond native weapons, for the village constable does not carry a rifle.

**Papua or British New Guinea,* p. 244.

In the mountain districts, murder is usually associated with cannibalism and it is this unpleasant offense that causes most trouble to the police. I had not been long in Mekeo before I realized how groundless were my fears concerning the practices of the natives there. There seems to be some question as to whether cannibalism was ever practised in this district. If it was, there is no evidence that it is still in vogue. Koi was horrified at my questions and denied stoutly that his people had ever partaken of "long pig." This attitude of indignant denial, however, means nothing in itself, for it is the inevitable reply to the suggestion, everywhere.

In the old days, before the "govamen" came, the Mekeo people were frequently the victims of their neighbors farther inland. Bands of warriors would come down from the mountains, devastate villages and gardens, butcher such of the inhabitants as they could lay hands on, and carry away as much of their remains as they could conveniently manage. In those days, the *dubu* boys really had a function—they were the main defense of their village and were constantly on the alert. The protection of the Government has removed the necessity for such precaution, which has resulted in a lapse into idleness of the younger men.

No doubt time will bring about further changes, for the Mekeo people are famous gardeners, and these young stalwarts, if they can accustom themselves to the idea, will find abundant occupation. The soil, in most of the district, is extremely fertile, and quite free from stones. Each village owns a considerable amount of territory, the boundaries of which are rigidly established by long-standing custom. Of this land, the property of the village, each family is assigned a portion for its own cultivation. The bush is cleared, usually by the men, the larger stumps being allowed to remain. The general care of the garden and its produce is left to the women. Once a crop has been gathered, the same patch is seldom replanted, a new plot being cleared. This allows a satisfactory rotation and avoids depletion of the soil. Unfortunately, deserted gardens are often invaded by saw-grass, so that in many sections the bush has gone, never to return.

The most important food crops are bananas, sweet potatoes and taro. The gardens of Jesubaiboa, at the time of our visit, happened to border the track between the village and the landing. Here we passed through great plantations of bananas, which must have extended for a mile or more on either hand. The principal variety grown is an importation, I believe, from Fiji, known as the Lord Cavendish. The ripened fruit is the finest I ever saw anywhere—very long and thick, and delicately flavored. We often made a meal of three or four. The people here seem to have gone in heavily for this introduced variety, though they still cultivate numerous other kinds.

Inawaia's gardens lay to the northwest of the village, at a considerable distance. I once lost myself in a stand of bananas here and did not find my way out for nearly half a day. Bananas are usually picked while still green, and eaten either boiled or roasted. Because of the inroads of fruit bats and birds, fruit that is intended to ripen on the tree is carefully wrapped in strips of bark.

Sweet potatoes, known as *kaima*, are grown in great quantities and in many varieties. In the mountains, they are cultivated almost exclusively and throughout that section form the principal food supply. There seems to be no doubt that this vegetable originated in America. One wonders what New Guinea lived on before it came.

In most sections of the lowlands, a second tuberous vegetable, known as taro, is grown extensively. The taro is a large, globular, rough-skinned root, of soapy consistency when boiled, and flat taste which I found most unpleasant. While we were in Inawaia, we deputed Koi as commissary agent, and had him purchase our food supplies in Jesubaiboa, his native village, to which he repaired at night. This duty, of course, Koi passed on to his "wifey," who visited us each day, sometimes accompanied by women friends, bringing our regular rations of sweet potatoes and bananas. No taro ever came to us from Jesubaiboa but occasionally Koi obtained some from Inawaia. No matter how great the supply, it never lasted more than one day. Puzzling over this mystery, I finally discovered that when taro was on hand, Koi's wife and children always remained to go home with him, and that his aged father invariably put in his appearance as well. The connection was so obvious that I questioned Koi, who explained, without trace of embarrassment, that taro did not grow well in Jesubaiboa's gardens, and that he felt his family was suffering from lack of this particularly nutritious and palatable food. He did not like to carry the surplus away with him, as this would be stealing, a crime beneath his dignity. If they wanted taro, let them come and eat it!

Taro certainly grows at Inawaia, though I do not know how well. The finest gardens of this vegetable I ever saw were at Inawaibui, two hours' sharp walk, or about eight miles, southeast of Inawaia. They were situated in rich, black loam, from which the saw-grass had been cleared, on the margins of the great Bioto swamp. I have seen these gardens partly or wholly inundated during periods of high water, but this did not seem to have a bad effect on the plants, which were tall and sturdy, with tremendous, heart-shaped leaves.

I have eaten many pawpaws in the American tropics and thought I knew all about them. But I am sure now that until the pawpaws of Papua have been tasted, one has much to learn about this delightful fruit. It grows abundantly in Mekeo, but is held in low repute by the people, who use it largely for pig food. It is larger than any pawpaws (or papaias) I have seen elsewhere, its firm, yellow flesh is more custard-like and its seeds are more strongly impregnated with the flavor of pepsin. Ward and I always kept a supply behind the door of our house, and our breakfasts in Mekeo often consisted of half a huge pawpaw and a cup of tea.

Many fruits and vegetables have been introduced by Government and Missions. Most of them are grown by the natives under orders and have not yet reached an accepted position in their economy. Maize, onions and tomatoes grow well enough but are not popular. Water melons are invariably picked before they are fully ripe—I never saw one opened that was more than faintly pink inside. Pineapples are more generally appreciated and reach a plane of excellence equal to that of the pawpaw. I should not like to say they are superior to the delicate, juicy product of Costa Rica but certainly the Papuan pineapple is as fine as that of Central America. Ward and I never reached a final settlement of our discussions of the merits of these fruits. The village pigs gathered beneath the house appeared to be impartial, for they greedily devoured the delectable remnants we slipped between the poles of the floor, in native fashion.

The coconut palm, of course, is of the greatest importance to the natives. There has been much argument as to whether or not this useful tree will grow above sea level; certainly it is not to be found in the Central Division, once the flat plains of Mekeo have been left behind. The palms of Mekeo are the tallest I have ever seen. Many of them were well over a hundred feet—Ward thought some were a hundred and fifty. All of the villages I visited were surrounded by dense groves of these lovely trees, their delicate fronds making an ever-moving fringe against the tropic sky.

Some one, somewhere, has made a list of sixty or more uses to which the palm is put. I shall not try to think of all, but a few come readily to mind: the milk of unripe nuts is a palatable and refreshing drink; the meat is eaten in various ways; the nut shells are used as utensils; the trunks of the trees are used in house-building; the leaves are used for thatching, for temporary baskets, for sunshades; the delicate, webby sheaths of the shoots make substitutes for mosquito-nets. Commercially, of course, the dried meat of the ripened nuts, known as copra, is one of the most important products of the tropics. The compressed oil is in great demand for the making of soap, and for a multitude of other uses.

The native has always cultivated the coconut in his usual lackadaisical manner. His haphazard methods produced enough for his needs, with a surplus to be used in trade with his less fortunate neighbors in the foothills. But a beneficent Government, casting about for some method to rouse the native from his apparent state of torpitude, which stirs the indignation of well-meaning people far from the scene of action, struck upon the plan of exacting a tax from all adult males. In Mekeo, this was fixed at one pound a year. It was felt that, with a little application, enough copra could easily be produced to pay this tax, the income from which is used for the betterment of native conditions. Moreover, the Mekeo boys are lithe and strong, and much in demand as carriers for mountain patrols—so much in demand, in fact, that they were beginning to object. It was thought that the younger boys, being unable to raise their tax money from the sale of copra, would be glad to earn it on the track.

The result of this well-laid plan has been rather curious. Once the people realized that real shillings, exchangeable for coveted trade goods, could be had for coconut meat, they fell to with a will. Each family now has its stand of trees, which produce enough copra to pay the tax and leave a decent balance, even *dubu* boys sharing in the benefits. So there has been no improvement in the carrier situation and Mekeo people have become almost indifferent to the blandishments of trade goods. Every man owns a steel ax, every woman has a fine big knife for her work in the garden. And the "idle" men and older boys, at whom the tax imposition was chiefly aimed, find ways to produce their copra without great increase of exertion on their own parts.

Old Blabbermouth, who could be trusted to find a way out, had simply passed the job on to his young son. This youth, usually assisted by a friend, made weekly visits to his father's trees, to collect the fallen nuts. Blabbermouth had erected a very high drying platform, well beyond the reach of dogs and pigs. Here the lads made great execution with huge trade knives or axes, taking pride in their ability to split husk and nut with a single herculean blow. After three or four days in the broiling sun, the dried meats were neatly flipped out with smaller knives, and stored against the next visit of Hayes or a possible trip to Yule Island. Blabbermouth was always in funds and carried in his shoulder net a discarded tobacco tin packed with silver shillings, all carefully wrapped in bits of leaf.

While the development of the native copra trade undoubtedly has brought about marked improvement in the general condition of the Mekeo people, there are signs of deep and growing discontent. The mountain tribes behind Mekeo pay no taxes and are seldom called upon to carry. The disgruntled lowlanders do not take into consideration the facts that their neighbors cannot produce copra for the payment of taxes, and that their location, small numbers and scattered villages make them almost useless for general carrying.

In spite of the growing affluence of Mekeo, pigs and dogs are still the most valued possessions. The wild pig is the largest mammal known to be found in New Guinea, although unconfirmed rumors indicate the possibility of further discoveries. It is a rangy, long-snouted creature, dark gray in color. It is particularly abundant in the lowlands and does great damage to gardens and plantations. Fully adult animals reach a considerable size and, when wounded, are dangerous antagonists. Many a hunting native has been well ripped before he could reach a haven in the nearest tree. A Mekeo shooting boy was not only killed but partly eaten before his remains were discovered.

In Mekeo, pigs are regularly hunted by organized parties of natives, who drive the animals into great nets made of native rope, by firing the grass or running them out with dogs. Once entangled, the larger pigs are speared but the smaller ones are carried back to the village to be reared. Very tiny ones are often adopted by women, who suckle them as they would their own babies. They are easily tamed and soon have the run of the village, along with the herd already present. Family rights in individual pigs are strongly defended and in Mekeo, at least, each family has an ear mark, consisting of holes and notches, by which its pigs are easily known. Few village pigs keep their tails for long, as these are eagerly sought for use as ear ornaments and necklace pendants.

While the native values his pigs highly and may even regard them with a considerable amount of affection, his treatment of them is not always gentle. In Inawaia, the pigs are fed chiefly on pawpaws, together with any vegetable waste that cannot be used in any other way. Blabbermouth's collection included a very large and greedy sow, together with two or three half-grown animals, one of which was lame. When the women came in from the gardens in the evening, they always brought along a supply of pawpaws, which were broken up by the children and placed in the pigs' trough, made of a hollowed length of palm trunk. This would immediately be rushed by the sow, whose ambition was to down the lot before the younger pigs could get a share. Young Blabbermouth and his unmarried sister would stand by, armed with tremendous clubs, which they bounced off the hardy ribs of the sow as often as she came within reach. The crash of these blows could be heard through half the village but the tough-skinned animal would only grunt and make for the other side. Blabbermouth did not resent this rough treatment of his best pig and appeared to have no interest as long as his animals were not actually killed.

It would naturally be supposed that, where pigs are cultivated, pork would be easily obtainable. Curiously, this is not so and as far as fresh meat in New Guinea is concerned, one might as well be marooned on a desert island with a tin of June peas. No Papuan native ever dreams of eating his own pig—or at least, if he does dream of it, his dreams never come true. Pigs are killed, by specially appointed dignitaries, for the feasts that follow dances, and on similar festal occasions. At such times, the meat is carefully divided amongst the guests, the hosts doing without. Later on, of course, they will be guests themselves and get back a bit of their own.

This forbearance is difficult to understand, for I never knew people as keen for meat as the Papuans. Their almost exclusively vegetarian diet is certainly not one of choice. No scrap of flesh is too small for their attention. After our return from the mountains, we were constantly besieged by interested natives, who hoped that some bird, however small, might possibly have died.

On one occasion, I was walking a track near the village, with Koi and Okoa, when Koi's sharp eyes detected a "wallaby" in the long grass. While he mounted guard, Okoa was despatched to the village for nets, dogs and hunters. Presently, half the village, whooping wildly, came swarming down the track, accompanied by a pack of dogs and bearing all the paraphernalia of the hunt. Nets were set, watchers armed with spears were posted and beaters lined up to drive out the game. I could see no sign of the animal, but suddenly there was a yell of triumph and everyone rushed toward a boy who was driving his spear furiously into the net. Presently he reached down and disentangled the "wallaby," which proved to be a tiny bandicoot, hardly larger than a well-grown guinea-pig. This he solemnly handed over to Koi, as the original discoverer and rightful owner. Koi, who was hugely delighted, carried the victim back to the village, roasted it on the coals, skin and all, and ate every scrap himself. I should have liked to preserve the skin but it was too badly damaged. However, I did note that this bandicoot had no tail whatever, and while the matter is in dispute amongst naturalists, it did not seem to me that it had ever had one.

At another time, as I was poking about the bush near

Inawaia, with young Okoa, we came upon a large pig, quite thoroughly dead. So dead, in fact, that we smelled him long before we reached the spot. The blow flies had found him before we did and their billions of eggs had already hatched, endowing the bloated flesh with new life. Okoa was horrified, for a dead village pig is a serious matter, which may lead to unpleasant consequences. Warning me, with a gesture, to keep silent, he approached on tiptoe, as closely as he dared, to make certain of the earmarks.

Having learned the owner of the huge lump of carrion, he crept off through the bush, crouching almost double. I followed in the same attitude, feeling as guilty as Okoa looked. The lad disappeared as soon as we had reached the village and I did not see him until evening. I asked him then what had happened to the *boroma* and he made a covert sign toward the bush on the opposite side. I looked just in time to see three or four men, threading their way silently in the shadows, each with a heavily loaded pole over his back.

I suspected what had happened and set out for the spot where the pig had been, Okoa following at a discreet distance. I found the place with some difficulty, for it was marked only by a tiny pile of ashes, from which a slender wisp of smoke still rose. Every vestige of the animal had disappeared. How anyone could eat such meat and live was beyond me. But that they had done so was amply confirmed by Koi.

The native domesticated dogs of Papua are of great interest, for their origin is shrouded in mystery. If their relationship could be satisfactorily worked out, something might be learned of the ancestry of their owners. The first one I saw was a tiny puppy, which a woman at the Jesubaiboa landing was nursing at her breast. Later, at Inawaia, I saw many dogs which I believe represented the breed in its purity. Fully grown animals would stand about eighteen to twenty inches at the shoulder and while they are rather slight in build, the suggestion of the dingo, the wild dog of Australia, is too marked to be lightly passed over. The ears are strongly pricked, the muzzle is sharp, the body coat is short and the tail is slightly bushy. The colors are either black or the yellowish brown of the dingo. Most of the animals are marked with white on the nape, breast, abdomen, tail-tip and feet. I cannot remember a solid black but I did see several that were all yellow, with no trace of white. One old fellow, gone a bit hoary about the muzzle and heavy in body, was so exactly like a rather small dingo, that I tried hard to photograph him. But these dogs are shy and I never was able to run him down.

As I have already said, the Papuan dog does not bark. However, he more than takes it out in howling. During the day, the village dogs spend most of their time sleeping under the houses or on the platforms. About five, or an hour or so before sunset, they begin to move about, the younger ones coming out into the village street to play. At such times, one would invariably begin to howl, when the whole pack would join, with great enthusiasm, in an ear-splitting chorus. If they kept it up long enough someone would fling a coconut husk or a piece of wood at them, causing them to run in terror.

Like their masters, these dogs are, of necessity, almost purely vegetarians. Their principal food consists of sweet potatoes, taro and boiled banana. They are experts in the art of digging out the meat of split coconuts and no doubt consume any other similar food they can come upon. It is natural to suppose that they do a good deal of hunting and supply their craving for meat with such small mammals and young birds as they can surprise and seize. However, I only once saw a dog in the bush on its own. I was standing perfectly still beside a great tree, when I noticed a movement some distance away. As I watched, a small black-and-white dog approached. He held his nose close to the ground, possibly following a scent, and did not see me until he almost stumbled over my feet. He stiffened instantly, took one horrified look straight up into my face, twisted about in his tracks and streaked for the village, never uttering a sound.

Besides dogs and pigs, the only animals I ever saw kept by natives were two tortoise-shell cats that belonged to a family in Inawaia. Cats are so much sharper than dogs at foraging for themselves that I have no doubt the small creatures of the surrounding bush paid heavy toll.

There were seven fowl in Inawaia—one demure little hen and a half-dozen scrubby, bedraggled cocks. The proportion of sexes was so unusual that I inquired into it and found that the birds were kept, not for producing eggs, but for growing white tail feathers. These are the insignia of one of the local clans, and were plucked out as fast as the unfortunate cocks could replace them.

Central Division people, at least, have little feeling for pets and never keep animals simply because they like them. Several times I saw wretched, tame white cockatoos living in *dubus*. Invariably, they were almost denuded of feathers, for these are the badges of still another clan. The birds are kept solely for this purpose and are so highly valued that I was never able to buy one.

CHAPTER III

UP THE MOUNTAIN TRACK

On the second morning after our arrival in Inawaia, we made a start on the next stage of our journey. Our destination was Inawaibui, the most southerly of the Mekeo villages. A great crowd of young men and small boys turned out, and took up our loads with shouts and laughter. The track is one of the best to be found, even in Mekeo. It is broad and flat, without a single inundation to vary its smoothness.

We must have covered five or six miles, when we noticed a series of raucous bird calls, coming from a patch of tangled bush, perhaps a hundred yards from the track. We worked our way into it and after a short search discovered, in a little clearing, a lovely play-ground of the fawn-breasted bower-bird.

It was built on a dense mass of heavy twigs, about four feet long by two wide, and fourteen inches high. This mound was slightly constricted at its middle and here the bower proper had been erected. It was formed by two parallel lines of very fine, straight twigs, their heavier ends wedged into the base with infinite care and precision. The bower measured, over all, fourteen inches long, by eleven high and ten wide.

At what might be called the front door of the bower, the mound was covered thickly with round, green seed pods, about the size of buck shot. Over these were scattered larger green pods, of two different sorts, and a green fruit very like a gooseberry. Several sprays of the smaller sort were hung on the twigs of the bower, inside the passage.

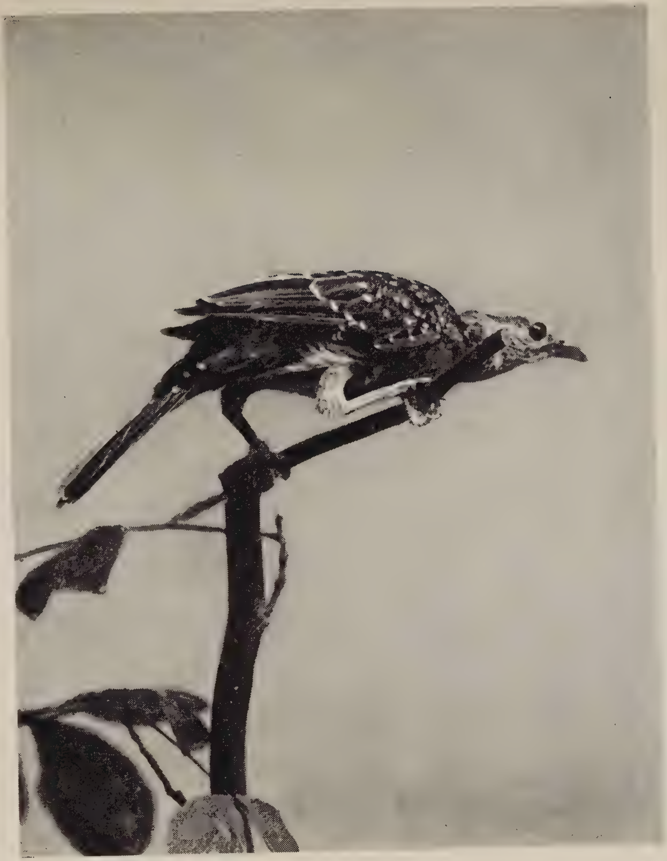
On the ground, a short distance away, was a rubbish heap formed of a considerable quantity of fruits and seed pods, in various stages of decay. On the next day, when we returned to make some photographs, the old decorations had been added to this pile, and fresh ones had been placed on the bower.

At various times, I saw a number of these bowers. Always, for some reason, they were placed close to native tracks or villages. The birds themselves were very shy, though they would remain in the vicinity, swearing loudly at my approach.

These elaborate structures are used entirely as courtship bowers and not as nests. Although the natives call the bower *manu rumana*, which means bird house or nest, they are well aware of its real purpose. A party of boys once pointed out to me what they said was the real *rumana*. It was a rough nest of twigs, about forty feet from the ground. As there was a bower in the bush nearby and the active, brown-plumaged birds were leaping about the branches cackling with excitement, I felt they might be right.

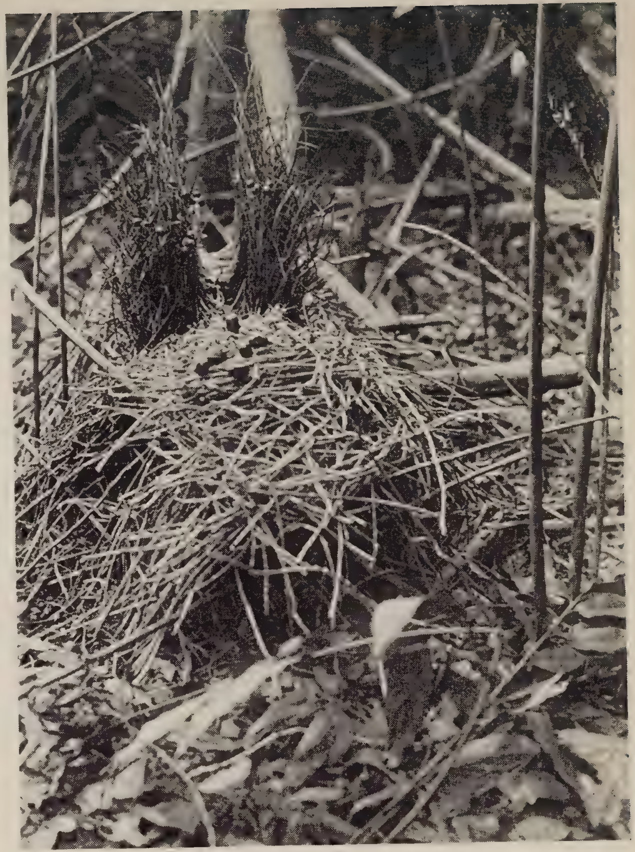
As Ward and I were making our way back to the track after our inspection of the bower, a tiny brownish bird flew from a nest, about six feet from the ground, in the centre of a tangle of lawyer vines. She was quickly joined by her mate, a lovely sprite of velvet black and violet blue, and the two proceeded to scold us in concert. This gay little bird, known as Bonaparte's blue flycatcher, is very common in the lowland scrub. The natives call it *li-li,* from its thin, two-syllabled call-note.

These pleasant diversions had occupied more time than we could well spare, and once back on the track, we started at full speed for Inawaibui. On arrival there, we found a village very much the same size as Inawaia and with the rest-house again its first building. Our gear was stored



FAWN BREASTED BOWER-BIRD COLLECTED BY THE EXPEDITION.

Photograph by E. R. Osterndorff. Courtesy New York Zoological Society.



BOWER OR PLAY-HOUSE OF FAWN-BREASTED BOWER-BIRD.

CARRIER CROSSING AYA RIVER, IN THE OWEN STANLEY RANGE.

within and about it, and the usual crowd was awaiting its reward.

Koi, who was still our only proper employee, was now acting as head boy. With his aid, we paid off the younger lads with two sticks of tobacco each. While most of the older ones had half agreed to go with us, a few had not expressed themselves, and we lined them up so that we could get a definite decision from each. We had no suspicion of any real trouble, or perhaps we should have been more careful about the first boy in the line. As it was, this happened to be a young man from Eboa, a Mekeo village about two miles northeast of Inawaia. Blithely enough, we asked him if he meant to go to the mountains. He shuffled his feet, glanced at the ground, then along the line of his fellows, evidently trying to summon his flagging courage. He must have found it, for he finally blurted out an agonized "*Lasi.*" His "No" meant little to us, for there were plenty of boys. But it meant something very definite to the next boy, who was more confident in his refusal. As we went down the line, the imitative idea gained impetus. When we came to the end, we found ourselves with a total of nine retainers—six from Eboa, one from Inawaia, and two from Jesubaiboa. These latter were Koi and his "sissi's pickaninny," Maino, a fine young chap, who later became assistant cook and camera boy. The rest remained firm in their decision and there was nothing to do but pay them off and let them go.

We settled our agreement immediately with the others, doling out six sticks of tobacco and a trade blanket to each, with a promise of ten shillings apiece on our return. This is the usual wage per month in Papua, and as we expected to complete the trip in about three weeks, they were well satisfied. The tobacco and blanket were by way of a binder. Ordinarily, if a Papuan accepts advance payment, he considers himself bound and will go through with his agreement.

Immediately on our arrival, we had been greeted by the village constable, who gave us the usual salute of "*kuku lasi, taubada.*" Every V. C. is in immediate and great need of tobacco and will always express this lack in his first sentence. We gave him a couple of sticks and received his promise that he would immediately secure as many carriers as we wanted. After lunch, we saw him skulking about and, on quizzing him, learned that he was very sorry but "all boy go walk about bush!" This was no surprise, as it is what Papuan boys usually do when carriers are needed. We seemed to be in rather a bad way, as we could go neither forward nor back without them.

I had had walking enough for one day but Ward felt it advisable to visit Bioto, a Roro village about four miles distant, and almost on the coast of Hall Sound. I could not let him go alone, so leaving Koi in charge, we set out. We found the village apparently deserted but finally discovered five or six men seated on a covered platform. They received us sullenly, feigning to understand neither English nor Motu. To our inquiries concerning the village policeman, however, one managed to say, quite understandably, that he "go walk about bush." Evidently word of our coming had preceded us.

In desperation, Ward told them, with some vehemence, that the policeman was to come to us at Inawaibui, as soon as he returned, and must bring us carriers. He further explained that if any of these men cared to come, they would receive the usual compensation of ten shillings, a blanket and food. At this, a particularly repulsive fellow, with strikingly Neanderthal features, roused from his lethargy. "Ten shillings?" he said. "No fear—one pound!" I was astounded at this display of English but Ward went into a rage. He told the man that this was robbery and that if he did not come at the offered rates, he would see him in jail. This threat brought no response and we retired, completely defeated.

That evening, while I applied adhesive tape to the blisters raised on my aching feet by the sixteen-mile walk, we held a council of war. We had to have carriers or give up for good. Ward was for going back to Kairuku, via Bioto and a native canoe, to ask for help. We decided, however, on the alternative of a runner.

Opu Kaki's brother, Avu, had remained with us, although, because of a damaged toe, he could not make the mountain trip. This disability, however, did not prevent him from travel in Mekeo and early next morning, accompanied by a friend selected from our small company, he set out. Borne proudly before him, in a cleft stick, was a note to Grist, asking his help.

Having dispatched Avu with the message, Ward and I went down the track and photographed the fawn-breast's bower. On our return, we were astonished to find that the man who had so impressively repulsed our offer of employment at Bioto had thought better of it, and had reported for duty. He was no beauty but on better acquaintance proved to be an excellent fellow. Moreover, it turned out that, aside from "Yes" and "No," his astonishing speech completely exhausted his English vocabulary. We never learned his name but since he responded to shouts of "Bioto," we let it go at that.

That night four boys from the local village joined up. Of these, three proved to be important personalities. One was named Maino, though no relation of Koi. The other was a slender, graceful chap, with particularly fine hair and a girlish look, which was no indication of his character. He spoke English much better than even Koi, although he did so only under stress of emotion. He was particularly pleased because we allowed the boys to sleep on the veranda of our house and next morning came to me and said, "*Taubada,* this New Guinea fashion. Next time, you get plenty boys!" This speech led me to suppose him a master of the language but I heard him speak English on only one other occasion. We called him the Wise Boy.

The third recruit, known to us as the Iron Man, was a widower from Inawa, near Angabunga, who was wooing an Inawaibui maiden. He was very short but stocky and tremendously muscled. His entire body was covered with the repulsive dry scale caused by the ring-worm disease common in the District. This, however, affected neither his social standing nor his effervescent spirits. Whenever a boy weakened under his load and fell behind, it was always the Iron Man who came back to relieve him. He carried a flute, made of a hollow stick about one-half inch in diameter, with three finger holes. On this he played at every opportunity, in very soft, monotonous minor notes. I never could detect any semblance to a tune.

On the morning after this fortunate addition to our ranks, loud shouts of "*Taubada!*" recalled us from a prowl through the bush. Koi met us with the information that "Two policeman he come!" We found a stern native Lance Corporal and a very black private, both armed to the teeth, awaiting us. Moreover, to my great delight, they were accompanied by a Chiria boy, whom Grist had sent along with three tins of my precious film, which I had been compelled to leave behind for fear of overloading the launch.

Under the vigilant eye of the Lance Corporal, the village constable became a strangely efficient autocrat. Urged by shrill blasts of his official whistle, the available boys of the village were quickly lined up for the inspection of the

L. C. Although Inawaibui is a large village and should have furnished more, there were only nine. Two were immediately exempted because of injured toes. The seven others were persuaded to join us, and accepted their preliminary payments with sheepish grins. Far from being disgruntled, they were rather pleased with themselves for having held out so long.

The two constables immediately departed for Inawaia, where they expected to round up further recruits. They succeeded, however, in getting only two, with which they returned that evening. In the morning, although we were still four boys short, we managed to make a start, two teams carrying double weight. Our course led us half way to Bioto, to a point where the mountain track strikes off toward the northeast. Here the whole party put down its loads, while the constables went on to Bioto, promising to send us the four needed carriers.

After a wait of an hour or more, occupied in battling clouds of voracious mosquitoes, the Bioto policeman arrived, bringing our four boys. He explained that the inhabitants of his own *dubus* were absent at a fair, or market, but he had persuaded these visitors from the Roro village of Mou to carry to Aropokena, our next stop. Before we were ready to leave there, he would bring us four of his own boys, who would see us through.

We now had a proper team of carriers, besides Koi, who carried only his private equipment—no light matter—in addition to some cook pots and the lantern. To the sound of repeated assurances of good faith on the part of the Bioto policeman, we struck off on the mountain track. For about a mile it tunnelled its way through the saw grass bordering the Bioto Swamp, then gradually began to rise. Grass was soon replaced by bush and we found ourselves among low, rounded foothills.

When we had left the swamp no more than a half mile behind, I suggested to Ward that we ought soon to be hearing the calls of Count Raggi's bird of paradise. He was just in the act of explaining that we were still too low, when his words were cut off by the clear, ringing *ka-ka-ka* that is so characteristic of the New Guinea highlands. The boys, of course, heard it as well—they miss no sound in the bush and identify the cause by a sort of second nature. But unless there is a chance for easily caught food, they ordinarily pay little attention. This time, however, those nearest us looked up and grinned, one or two exclaiming "*Lokohu!*" The sound rose to a sharp crescendo and stopped. We stood transfixed, our eyes on the wooded side of a little hill, no more than a hundred yards distant. And then, for just an instant, we saw him—a glorious creature, with deep chocolate body, brilliant golden head and the long, blood-red plumes that have been the death warrant for so many thousands of his kind. In a flash he was gone, but I was so completely thrilled that I remained in a state of exaltation for the rest of the day. Only a naturalist will understand what that vision meant to me.

As the afternoon wore on, we once or twice again heard the distant challenge of the birds, but it was evident that we had not yet reached an elevation at which they were really abundant. The bush was rapidly thinning until finally the hills became park-like, covered with thin wiry grass, and scattered, stunted eucalyptus trees. It was very hot in the open and we were glad at last to reach a rest-house, at the base of a fairly high hill. The point is known as Aropokena (always pronounced Alopokena by Koi), although there is no longer a village there.

For some years the Government had been conducting experiments with mule transport on the mountain track, for the purpose of conveying supplies to an outpost known as Kambisi. Mats of rice were brought up the Ethel River, from Hall Sound, by means of launches, and unloaded at Aropokena. Here it was stored and diligent effort made to further its progress on mule-back. There were many obstacles, principally, I should think, the difficulty of the track, and up to the time of our visit only a small quantity of rice had been carried as far as Matsika or Valia. The rest-house had been taken over by the "muley-man," who was absent. Fortunately, however, we found that his lock was only a makeshift, sufficient to keep out curious natives but intended to yield readily to white men in need of shelter.

The four Mou boys, impatient to return home, accepted their wage, in the form of a few sticks of trade tobacco each, and departed, thoroughly pleased. The others, stricken by the cold, which was little more than imaginary at the elevation of one hundred feet or less, drew their blankets about them and shivered. One or two, including the Iron Man, complained of "fever," but were quickly, even miraculously, cured by small doses of quinine. There is a separate house for carriers at Aropokena, but the boys were reluctant to go to it, preferring to squat about on the ground, where they could keep in closer contact with the *taubadas.*

We had had no lunch but somehow did not feel the need of it and let it go. This became our regular custom when on the track. We always made a start as early as possible and stuck at it, with only brief and infrequent blowing spells, until we had reached our destination. This usually left us too late for luncheon and too early for dinner. We did not really miss the meal and our system proved its worth. Once Mekeo has been left behind, rain is of almost daily occurrence, starting any time after noon and usually continuing all night. Ward and I never got a real soaking, though the boys were not always so fortunate.

After a rest, we left Koi in charge and went out to view our surroundings. It was possible to see for a considerable distance among the open hills, which, with their grassy slopes and scattered trees, looked very much like pictures of rolling country on the African veldt. Flocks of lories were moving about and purple glossy starlings were numerous. In a little hollow behind the house there stood a great kapok tree, its gaunt branches covered with snowy bunches of cotton. Here the starlings had built a great number of their globular nests, looking like rather dejected oranges hanging on a Christmas tree. The birds were constantly coming and going, making a tremendous hubbub. In the midst of the uproar a manucode, approaching with typical undulating flight and quite possibly with evil intent, alighted in the tree. Instantly the starlings attacked him and, pursued by the screaming hordes, the great black bird dashed for the shelter of a nearby grove.

Close to the rest-house was a small, grassy paddock, occupied by several mules of discouraged appearance, presumably resting after strenuous effort on the track. During the absence of the muley-man, these animals were in charge of six half-grown youths from Inawaibui. Since New Guinea boasts no known land animal of greater size than the pig, the few large domestic animals owned by Missions and Government are regarded by the natives with awe and terror. It must be admitted that the average mule is not a gentle creature and these Inawaibui lads had learned to add respect to fear and aversion in their general attitude toward their charges.

It was time for the animals' evening meal and from the first it was obvious that a special show was to be put on, for the benefit of ourselves and our boys. Six youths carrying gunny-sacks filled with maize gathered before the bars of the corral. Suddenly one lad left the group, climbed the fence like a squirrel, dashed to an empty feed box which had no mule in attendance, dumped his bag of maize, and made the return trip in a flash. The hungry animals charged on the box, with the natural result of a battle royal for its possession. The boys evidently had planned on this, for instantly they swarmed over the fence, each intent on a particular box. But this time the mules were on the alert, and leaving their battle, wheeled and rushed for the other boxes. Not a bag was dumped, the boys fleeing for their lives over the fence.

It looked like complete defeat but two of the larger boys, galled by the jibes of the onlookers, determined to risk all on a single throw. Armed with stout clubs, they climbed to the upper rail, hesitated for a few seconds, then leaped to the ground. Each made a rush for the nearest mule. There were two resounding whacks, as the heavy weapons landed on the sagging ribs of the startled animals. The dull thud of flying heels immediately followed, as they crashed against the sides of other mules playing the rôle of innocent bystanders. The pandemonium that resulted was too much for the boys—they dropped their weapons and fled.

The muley-boys now gave up all show of bravado and reverted to what was evidently their usual procedure. Long sticks were inserted between the bars and the grain boxes within reach were drawn under the fence. When all that could be secured in this manner had been gathered in, they were filled with maize and shoved through again. Boxes too far away were left empty.

The entertainment over, the boys began to think of supper and finally sent a delegation to Koi, with the request that the "ricey" be served out. This was always something of a ceremony, two boys usually appearing with a blanket or a discarded bag, into which Ward or I poured the rice, a pannikin to each boy. No hope of our holding out a measure or two, when rations were low, for sharp-eyed watch was kept on every move. We might lose track of the number, but not they.

Under the general supervision of the carrier troop, the rice was poured into a kerosene tin, and very carefully washed. I never saw a boy wash himself or the tin before this rite, but he would never think of cooking rice that had not been well scoured. The rice is then thoroughly boiled over a small fire. "Thoroughly" is completely descriptive, for the rice is not ready to serve until it has been reduced to a solid mass of starch and the individual grains are no longer distinguishable. The boys then gather around the tin, each bearing a large green leaf or a piece of bark, and the meal is fairly apportioned, lump for lump, by the committee of the evening. The native sense of justice seems to function perfectly on these occasions, for I never heard the slightest hint of the disputes that might be expected to arise.

A pint of dry rice, after it has been boiled in native fashion, makes a mound of sticky, revolting food that would appal a white man but is heaven to a native. He appreciates a pinch of salt, of course, and we often doled it out sparingly when we had it. But if there is no salt, the rice goes down just the same, helped on its way by a sliver of wood used as a spoon.

I doubt if a white man could accomplish this feat without the aid of some liquid to wash the rice down, but the native makes no difficulty about it. In fact, rack my brains as I will, I cannot recall ever having seen a native drink anything whatever, aside from the milk of a fresh coconut. Even on the mountain tracks, where heat and exertion caused me to stop at each of the clear, cold brooks we crossed, the boys never drank. Koi did everything in his power to keep me from indulging, declaring that water was *dika* (bad) and would make me very ill (rubbing his stomach). Possibly this was due to unpleasant experience with stagnant lowland water, which even I hesitated to drink. But certainly the pure water of the mountain rills never had a bad effect on me.

By the time the meal was finished, the sudden darkness of the tropics was falling. Our carriers retired to the shelter occupied by the muley-boys, which was large enough for all. Ward and I made ourselves as comfortable as the rough poles of the rest-house floor would permit and Koi stretched himself on the veranda, outside. Before we dropped off to sleep I listened, for the first time, to the group singing, which is such an important feature of native Papuan life.

The people of Mekeo, both men and women, fancy themselves as singers and occasionally stage competitive group sings. On such occasions use is made of ancient songs, the words of which have been handed down from generation to generation and often are no longer intelligible to the singers. But the informal singing of the individual or of groups of carriers away from home is quite a different matter. A boy resting on the track, suddenly oppressed by his hard lot in life, will burst into low, monotonous song, repeating over and over one or two improvised lines. At such times the singer is entirely free from embarrassment nor do his fellows pay him the slightest attention.

Often, in the dead of night, we were awakened by the song of a boy who felt the necessity of expressing his longing to return to his village. Always he was allowed to continue without interruption by his fellows, who must have been disturbed by the sound. Songs of this sort are the simplest expressions of feeling, sung in a dismal, minor key. They may be ribald or even obscene; usually they are occasioned by hunger or lonesomeness. Except during a dance, I never heard singing accompanied by any sort of instrument.

Our boys had not been long in their shelter when a wailing note came clearly to us on the night air. It was the first singing voice I had heard and of course I was immediately interested. The same words were repeated over and over, when suddenly the singer was joined by a chorus that seemed to be composed of all or most of the boys in our party. There was some attempt, not strikingly successful, at harmony and one or two high voices rang clearly above the rest. This continued for some time. When it finally died down there was a short pause and then a thin, youthful voice broke forth. The same system was followed—a brief refrain was sung over and over, and then the voice was joined by a chorus so obviously young that I realized that here was a competition of sorts, with our carriers pitted against the muley-boys. I was too sleepy to stir up Koi to get the exact meanings of the songs but they would have been of the usual character. The carriers would proclaim that they were the finest, strongest and bravest young men of Mekeo; that their villages were the largest to be found anywhere; that their women were the most beautiful in the world and made the finest gardens. The muley-boys, admitting their youth, would have to fall back on their unusual prowess and courage in handling such strange and savage creatures as mules; lads of such precocious development undoubtedly would grow up far better men than their older brothers.

I listened as long as I could keep awake, but finally dozed off.

The morning light was fairly good by five-thirty, the usual rising hour. When Ward and I emerged from the rest-house, stiff after our first night on poles, the ricey delegation, armed with a blanket, already awaited on the veranda. The rice was soon meted out and Ward and I had seated ourselves to tea and ship's biscuits when the Bioto policeman appeared. His evident fright prepared us for the gist of a long tale he related to Koi and which finally was briefly translated to us: "No boy come." This was bad news for us, although we had hardly expected four carriers to replace the departed Mou boys. We had planned to leave behind two loads of cages and a bag of rice against the return journey, but we had hoped for one or two recruits from Bioto.

Ward flew into a perfectly justified rage, completely exhausting his rather unusual store of expletives. He assured the policeman that he would have him jailed immediately on our return to Kairuku. Much of this was lost, of course, on the ears of the already frightened native, but he had no difficulty in taking the point and fled, horrified, down the homeward track.

The boys had finished their rice by now and we called them to attempt a start, short-handed. In spite of the loads that were to be left behind, however, we could not rearrange the remainder in loads small enough for the journey ahead. Trouble immediately followed. Two or three teams seized on small lots, lashed them to poles with strips of bark and started away. At our shouts, they halted and returned, unwillingly. A scene of great confusion followed, as the boys shouldered and shoved each other about, seeking the lightest loads.

Ward, hardly recovered from his affair with the Bioto policeman, stood quietly for a moment. He was trembling with the effort to control his rising anger. Suddenly, unable to restrain himself, he rushed, roaring, into the mêlée. One of the half-hearted recruits from Inawaibui had just removed a small bag of rice from his load and thrown it on the ground. Ward pounced upon the bag and replaced it. The boy, grinning with impudence, was about to discard it again, when Ward seized the other end. The two stood facing each other, holding the bag of rice suspended over the load. Ward had gone quite white, the muscles of his jaws taut, the arteries bulging on his temples. The boy faced him boldly, relying on his knowledge of the law that forbids a white man to strike a native, even a mutinous one. Both he and Ward knew quite well that such a blow impended. If it should be struck, the majority of our carriers would immediately drop everything and set out for Kairuku to prefer charges. The boy was obviously egging Ward on, so that he might have an excuse for leaving us. It was a tense moment, with the fate of our expedition depending on the outcome.

We were saved the suspense of awaiting the decision, however, for the deadlock was ended by a shout from the track. It heralded the return of the Bioto policeman. His own beaming pride was in sharp contrast with the downcast expressions of three boys who trailed sheepishly behind. Through the medium of Koi, the policeman explained that he had returned to his village, prevailed upon the three boys to accompany him, and had brought them up as quickly as possible. All of which was the most perfect rot, of course, for Bioto was quite ten or twelve miles distant, and the round trip would require at least half a day. The scheming wretch had not been gone over half an hour. Obviously, he had hidden the boys not far down the track, before his first visit. He had then come up to us, hoping that his long face would secure them an exemption and so place them in his debt, a situation at which every village policeman is an artist.

The readiness with which we accepted his childish explanation must have added greatly to his own opinion of himself as a diplomat, for we were so delighted with the replacement forces that all thoughts of further argument were thrown aside. The policeman was amply rewarded for his clever work with six sticks of tobacco and happily departed.

The disturber from Inawaibui was as pleased as anyone else with the outcome of his single-handed rebellion. He had made a tremendous impression on the other boys and at once became the leader of a faction which later caused us trouble. I had hardly noticed the fellow before he asserted himself but now I marked him well. He was a tall man, with the narrow hips and strong, sinewy shoulders of his race. His face, plainly never handsome, was covered with small, round pits, like those left by small-pox. We knew him after that as Pock-mark. He was the only one of our carriers who ever really meant us ill, but his unruly disposition came within an ace of wrecking our expedition.

The pleasant reaction caused by the unexpectedly happy turn of our affairs was not quite equal to the task of balancing the depressing effect of the morning's excitement. It seemed to me that we could not survive many such rows and that sooner or later the happy ending would fail to materialize. Before many days had passed I had come to take the uproar of the morning start as a matter of routine, for it is impossible for carriers to take up their loads without what appears to be an incipient riot. Perhaps it was just as well that this trying experience came at the beginning, for after that I was prepared for almost anything.

The loads were quickly made up and we were off up the track. It was nine o'clock and the sun, already high, was striking through the thin foliage of scattered, stunted trees. And now I had my first experience with New Guinea mountains, for the track went steadily up and up, for a distance of between two and three miles. My only burden was a gun, but this was a heavy, three-barrelled affair, which took on the weight of a cannon as I progressed. This weapon was taken along on the chance that game might appear. We had no licensed shooting boy and since no native may be allowed to carry a gun without official sanction, I was elected gun-bearer. I soon found that this position was no sinecure, and many times I cursed both the gun and its makers. Only my promise to return it safely to the friend who had proudly lent it prevented me from hurling it down the first ravine we crossed.

Well over an hour was required to reach the top of this first hill. Long before I got there and dropped down among the resting boys, I was saturated from head to foot with perspiration. Ward, true to British tradition, had insisted that I wear an undershirt of heavy wool. This fearsome garment, anathema to every American, at least in hot weather, had seemed to me particularly repellent. I wore it with loathing. Now, however, as I began to cool off, I realized that my woolen shirt gave me a much-needed protection. One can become accustomed to almost anything, it seems, for I finally became so attached to my woolly that even after our return to steaming Mekeo I continued to wear it—or its fellow! Not until after we had returned to Sydney did I resume the pleasant, rational BVD.

Marching in New Guinea is serious, strenuous business. For me, at least, it was made particularly difficult by the fact that carriers, if they can avoid it, never stop while climbing a hill, no matter how long or how difficult it may be. While it is not necessary always to be with the train —we never had anything stolen from a load—the white traveller cannot stop to blow too often without losing caste in the eyes of his boys.

But even the boys were glad enough to rest this time, for it was the first stiff bit we had encountered. Ward tactfully drew from the slack of his blouse a handful of very moist sticks of tobacco, and distributed a small piece to each of the boys. They took it with an eagerness that helped ease their fatigue. I hope they enjoyed it fully, for while later on we were often in a much worse state, we seldom gave out tobacco that was not earned. Quite right, too, for the native knows nothing of giving. He never gives himself, unless in expectation of future return. Consequently, he accepts the gifts of white men only with contempt.

As I rested, panting, I was astounded and shamed by a procession of six women, who came up the track in single file and passed directly through our party, giving and evoking no word of greeting. On their backs they carried huge nets, bulging with sweet potatoes and coconuts, along with cooking pots, babies and sundries. They showed no signs of fatigue and I continued to gape until they had passed out of sight. Koi then volunteered the information that these were the "wifeys" of six of our boys. They would accompany us as far as Kubuna, our next stop, to make certain that their men were properly fed. Any two men in our team would have refused to take up the load each of these women carried without a thought of protest.

CHAPTER IV

DEVA–DEVA

For some miles beyond Aropokena the track runs among the rounded hills, with grassy slopes and scattered trees. This seems to be the last stronghold of many of the lowland birds. Here we left behind the noisy glossy starlings and Dumont's myna, a handsome bird of glossy black, with a large circular space of yellow, wrinkled skin about each eye. As we progressed, patches of bush became larger and more numerous, and presently, as we came up a steep climb along the bottom of a deep gully, we abruptly entered the high forest. It was like a new world, for the broiling rays of the sun were immediately cut off, leaving the air moist and cool. The little sounds of birds and insects, that go to make up the voice of the jungle, brought us a sense of companionship. Loud and clear above them all came the calls of Count Raggi's bird of paradise. We heard, too, the four-syllabled call of the New Guinea pitta, known to Mekeo as *kuvvi-kuvvi.* This brilliantly colored, ground-haunting little bird is common in the lowlands and at this point is somewhere near the highest elevation it reaches.

The track here, while fairly rough, was not too bad, except for occasional patches of slippery red clay. There were also numerous boggy spots, difficult to get around because of the extreme density of the bush. Here we made the acquaintance of the land leech, a horrible, thread-like creature which lies in wait for its prey on track-side shrubs or even on the moist earth itself. Curiously, I can remember the first one I ever saw. I had stopped for a brief blow after drinking at a brook and was standing in the track at the foot of a sharp little rise. My eyes happened to drop to the ground and fixed themselves upon a tiny object, which seemed to sway in the wind. My curiosity aroused, I broke off a twig and tapped the earth gently. Instantly, the object of my attention extended itself and whirled madly, with a circular motion, reaching out in all directions as far as it could. I knew it then for a leech, its body buried in the track, waiting to attach itself to whomever or whatever might pass.

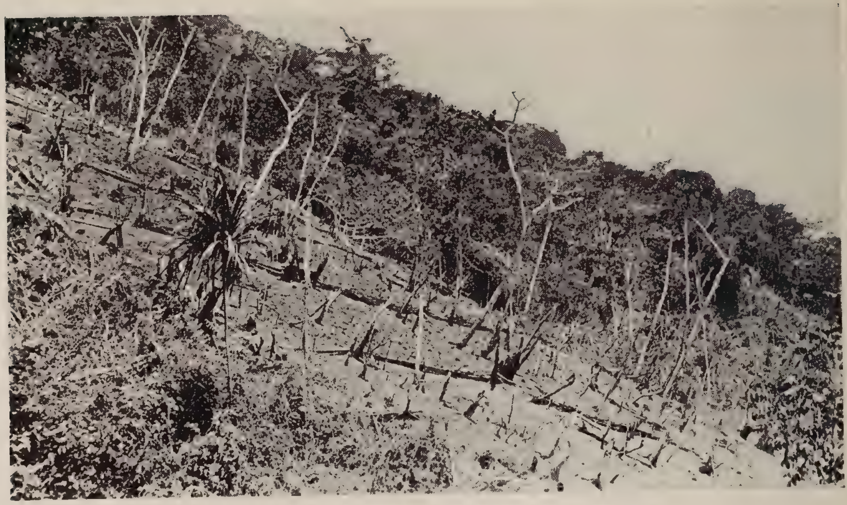
Leeches were a constant annoyance to us, for I do not think leech-tight clothing, endurable in the tropics, has been invented. I had brought along a pair of spiral puttees, against the advice of Ward. I wore them once, got them so weighted with mud and water that I could hardly lift my feet from the ground, and threw them away. Thereafter, Ward and I wore only ordinary ankle boots, so that leeches found everything quite simple. We detached them from our skins whenever we saw them, but usually our first knowledge of their presence was the sight of trickling blood. When a leech really has his fill he becomes greatly distended, quite round, and resistant as a small rubber ball. If he gets inside one's boots, he is sometimes smashed, with gory results, or he may be simply rolled out at night. In the tropics, one soon learns to dump one's boots at night, as well as in the morning.

The boys, of course, suffered greatly from the attacks of these dreadful little brutes, which seemed usually to fasten between their toes. However, they took them more or less philosophically, as they did mosquitoes. The leech has the unpleasant habit of leaving his drinking places open when he has finished, so that blood always runs freely. These wounds frequently become infected, resulting in "bush sores," fearsome in appearance and difficult to heal.

Although huge, voracious water leeches abound in the lowlands, I never saw land leeches there. But they are all too common in the mountains, seeming to increase in abundance with the altitude. On one occasion, I stopped to talk, in sign language, with a strange native whom I came across, seated on a large stone on the bank of a brook. After a moment, I noticed that I was simply crawling with land leeches, and rushed up on a bank to pick them off. The man, grinning broadly, helped me to rid myself of as many as possible and promptly returned to his perch on the rock, not seeming to mind being eaten alive.

Early in the afternoon, Ward and I had had some difficulty with a bog and the boys had got ahead of us. As we came rushing around a turn in the track, in hot pursuit, we came upon them suddenly, enjoying a spell in the company of twenty or thirty people, who Koi said were from Lapeka and Epa. They had met here beside a stream, the first we had encountered, for the purpose of holding a market. Each party had brought along the commodities it could best spare and brisk bargaining in exchanges was going on. Both men and women were gaily dressed, and while the gathering seemed a small affair, it was evidently of importance to them. We learned later that the Epa people had been decimated and scattered, by an outbreak of sickness, and no doubt this meeting was as large as the survivors could manage. An attractive young woman, more extravagantly decorated than any of the others, had waded out into a pool, where she stood with water up to her hips, her rami floating about her on the surface. I remember her particularly, because she was the first woman I had ever seen make an attempt at bathing, and I saw only one other.

SECTION OF THE OWEN STANLEY MOUNTAINS AS SEEN FROM DILAVA. LEFT, VIRJUS DOME; RIGHT, NAVARRE NEEDLES.



MOUNTAIN GARDEN, DEVA-DEVA, SHOWING PRIMITIVE TERRACES.

THE EXPEDITION'S CAMP AT DEVA-DEVA.

These markets are an essential factor in the lives of the New Guinea peoples, for they give the opportunity for exchange without which life would be very difficult. They range from the huge affairs of the populous coastal villages to the sort which we had now encountered, where a few simple bush people meet by appointment at some isolated spot. Puppies, piglets, coconuts, betel nuts, pots, ropes, beads, shell ornaments, and the plumes of birds of paradise are thus passed along from village to village. In this way, articles from the coast, even pots from distant Port Moresby, may eventually reach the far interior. So important is the market that people not ordinarily friendly toward each other will often make an appointment, travel miles with heavy loads to keep it, and maintain the truce until all have returned to their villages.

The chance meeting with this gathering was a happy occasion for our boys and they were enjoying it to the full. Betel nuts and lime pots were being passed about; everyone seemed to have tobacco. Heavy clouds were gathering, evidence that the regular afternoon rain was not far off. All Mekeo natives, men particularly, are very reluctant to get wet and will do everything possible to avoid it. It is a common sight to see them, when caught by accident, marching along a track or through a village holding an umbrella made of a huge banana leaf or even of palm fronds woven roughly together. Mountain men, who keep their hair comparatively short, usually wear a head covering of bark cloth, because the constant rain in their country is impossible to avoid. But Mekeo men, with their huge mops, can use no such protection. I laid this dread of rain to the probability that, once thoroughly soaked, their hair would be difficult to dry, with resultant risk of colds or even pneumonia.

Nothing we could say, even the promise of a good wetting, would induce the boys to make a start, and Ward and I finally went on without them. Ward thought we had about three miles to do before we reached Kubuna, our day's objective, and we were as anxious to get there before the storm broke as the boys should have been. As we hurried along, we heard the booming of a crowned pigeon from the bush nearby. It was a deep and dolorous sound, with a curious ventriloquial quality and an appropriate suggestion of sadness, for the "gaura" is now a very rare bird, at least in the Central Division. The days when scalps, with their lovely head plumes, were exported by the thousands have long since passed, but a pigeon as large as a turkey hen is still good to eat. I did not hear the booming call more than two or three times during my stay in New Guinea and saw not a single bird in the flesh.

In less than an hour of fast walking we reached the Kubuna River, a stream of considerable size, which flows almost due south to the sea. There was a native bridge here, in good condition, on which we crossed. It was firmly anchored at the land ends, with substantial platforms, reached by sketchy ladders. The bridge was of the suspension type and built entirely of strong vines, lashed together with bark. The foot-path was of thin poles, laid lengthwise, with so little regard for the limitations of boot-clad feet that there was a good chance of slipping through. There was, however, a hand rail, from which I suppose one could hang if the footing proved too tricky. Ward and I crossed over one at a time, for while the bridge was probably quite safe, it swayed so desperately when one was in the middle that there was real danger of being pitched off sideways.

These bridges are so picturesque a feature of New Guinea that I resolved to photograph this one, preferably with the boys crossing. However, my excellent intention came to nothing, for while I crossed the bridge on four different occasions I was always in too much of a hurry to hunt out and rig a camera. Moreover, the boys dampened my ardor by refusing to use the bridge at any price, insisting on wading a ford some distance farther down stream. I felt that their experience with native bridges was greater than mine and thought it wiser not to insist.

Just beyond the bridge was a small clearing, surrounding a tiny rest house and a very decent boys' house. The latter was provided with a roomy veranda and a screen of grass hung from the peak of the roof. Just as we reached it, rain began to fall in torrents and Ward and I dived for the veranda. We managed to keep quite dry and had been there for at least half an hour when the boys began to arrive, running at top speed through the rain. With them came the six "wifeys," who evidently had been mixed with the crowd at the market. We huddled, loads and all, in the house and veranda, waiting for a let-up.

The night before we left Inawaibui a man had brought a small boy, about eighteen months old, to visit us. He had tried hard to have the child make friends with us, but this the boy positively refused to do, bawling in terror each time his parent pushed him toward us. His screams caused the father to roar with merriment, rocking to and fro on his haunches and all but rolling on the ground. As we sat squeezed amongst the sweating natives at Kubuna, a boy who sat next to Ward called to his wife, who was somewhere inside. She managed to wriggle her way to him, carrying a baby girl about the same age as the boy who had afforded such good sport for his father and his friends at Inawaibui. The father took the child, caressed it for a moment and then held it up to Ward. Whether this little girl differed in temperament or in training from the Inawaibui boy I do not know, but she immediately held out her hands to Ward, who took her on his lap. For quite half an hour we took turns in playing with her and found her quite as friendly and easy to amuse as any white child of similar age would have been. While she listened to the tick of my dollar watch or twisted a bit of string offered by Ward, the parents sat quietly by, grinning fondly. There seems to be nothing hereditary in the native female's dread of white men!

After the rain slacked a bit and as evening was drawing near, we ventured out. Enough dry wood for the fires was found and soon the boys had their rice tin over and Koi was boiling water for tea. In the excitement, one boy had missed getting his blanket, and as it could not be found we had to give him a piece of "Hessian"—a flimsy sort of burlap—to keep him from freezing! Two of the Bioto boys had brought their own blankets but the other had nothing, so to ease his shivering Ward gave him an old blue coat he had brought along. This the boy donned with delight, causing great merriment amongst the others, who called him "*taubada*," and laughed uproariously. This little diversion, together with the prospect of food, made them forget their soaking. While the elevation at Kubuna is less than two hundred feet, they did feel the cold and huddled about the fires. One or two made the usual complaints of "fever" and the usual miraculous cures were made with a few grains of quinine. Several had injured toes and feet, caused by stepping on stones concealed under leaves on the track. There are no stones in the lowlands of Mekeo and the boys had had little experience avoiding them. Young Okoa had an especially severe bruise, which I bound up with a long piece of gauze bandage. Next morning, when Okoa appeared, his injury was forgotten and the bandage was wound gracefully through his hair, as a decoration.

The presence of the women and the limited quarters available made arrangements for the night somewhat embarrassing. While Ward and I were discussing this knotty point, we noticed that most of the boys were crawling under the rest house, which was about four feet above the ground. Koi explained that the married couples would occupy the boys' house and the others would sleep underneath ours. He himself would occupy it with us, if we wished, sleeping before the door to make certain that we would be quite safe. We accepted this dodge without a blink, for, after all, the wet, cold ground did not seem the best place for our only interpreter to sleep. I had supposed the boys could curl themselves up on the veranda of their house, but this they would not do as long as the women were inside.

They must have been very miserable where they were but they were all astir at dawn, and none developed pneumonia or even a cold. The only casualty was a young lad who had received a nasty gash in the middle of his back from a jagged piece of tin projecting from one of the piles of the house. This cut was at least six inches long and very deep, and was bleeding profusely. As I dressed it, I mentally placed him on the sick list for good. However, while the wound took some time to heal fully, it never seemed to trouble him in the least and he always carried his full load. This boy was thin to the point of emaciation and was covered from head to foot with scale, but he appeared to suffer no inconvenience from any of his afflictions.

Leaving a small bag of rice against possible need on our return, we got away in good time, with everyone in high spirits. The women remained behind and the boys marched much better without them, although they had taken over considerable supplies of potatoes, coconuts and betel. As was the case the day before, the track from Kubuna goes straight away up a long hill, so that we marched for two hours without a stop. The footing now became very bad, the reddish clay deeply rutted by the sharp hoofs of mules and the constant rains. My notes say it was "indescribably slippery," which seems mild enough. At Kubuna, we left mosquitoes behind but leeches now became very numerous. The legs and feet of the boys were soon streaming with blood, and Ward, who had tried going barefoot in the hope that he might avoid slipping, found it advisable to put his shoes on again. Leeches are less annoying if they aren't seen.

We had not gone far through the forest when we began to hear the loud, harsh *cra-cra-a-a* of the magnificent rifle-bird, a beautiful iridescent black bird of paradise, with short, though lovely, side plumes. We saw and heard rifle-birds from an elevation of about two hundred feet up to somewhere about two thousand. I never noted them below two hundred and certainly not much above the higher mark.

Locohus (Count Raggi's birds of paradise) were calling in all directions as we passed along the heavily forested hillsides. As we entered a little glade, where the undergrowth was less dense and tangled than usual, a small, brilliantly colored bird half flew and half hopped across the track. It stopped for an instant on a rotting log and I saw that it was a Macklot pitta, its blue chest and scarlet belly sharply defined against its green body. As we had come up the track from Kubuna, I had noticed that while the pitta calls I heard were double-syllabled, they were louder and coarser than before. Ward said this was because we had left the lowland species behind and that it had been replaced by the far more beautiful mountain bird. I found this to be true. Just where the transition takes place I am not certain, but I do not believe that, at least in this section, the lowland pitta goes higher than a very few hundred feet. Macklot's pitta is known to the natives as *kwa-kwa,* a name less perfectly onomatopœic than *kuvvi-kuvvi,* which is an excellent rendering of the pitta's call. I often woke at night and heard this double note from the neighboring bush. I supposed the birds were calling from their perches, though it is possible that they may be at least partially nocturnal.

The terrain gradually became rougher and the track went endlessly up and down the sides of the razor-backed ridges so typical of inland New Guinea, or teetered precariously along their very peaks. Here the footway was narrow and dangerous, often no more than two feet wide, with steep slopes falling sharply away to deep abysses far below. The end of our first two hours brought us to a small, ancient clearing and here the boys dropped their loads for our first spell, this spot evidently having been selected in advance by Koi.

Signs of fatigue now became evident here and there, several boys being crocked by stone bruises or general exhaustion. After an unusually long spell, lasting half an hour, the loads were rearranged to relieve those unable to do their full share, and a fresh start was made. Koi now had to carry, so Ward took Koi's lot and I took Ward's equipment in addition to my own. Ward was feeling a bit feverish and the added weight made him no better. We had each been taking six grains of quinine daily and so far I had not been troubled with malaria. But this old enemy was constantly nagging at Ward and now began to get in its deadly work in earnest. He became alternately deathly pale in a chill or flushed with fever. He kept his feet with difficulty but nothing would induce him to give up his load or to rest when the boys were moving. Just as his iron endurance had reached its limit, we reached the crest of a ridge and looked down upon a tiny clearing, with two little huts near its far edge. This is known, officially, as Dieni but to Koi it was Iyenga. We all took heart and soon the loads were rested before a very small rest-house and a good-sized, rickety boys' house.

Ward was in really bad shape by now. I knew I had to get him under blankets and outside a stiff drink of whisky and a dose of quinine. The house was furnished with a really good built-in shelter at the front and I got Ward to sit here on a box while I reconnoitred. As usual, the door was tightly locked but this time the lock would not slip through the hasp. No one had told us to expect this condition and, of course, we had no keys. There was no time to be lost and I could not wait on ceremony. I rushed to a load, detached an ax, and popped back into the veranda. Peeking out, I made certain that all of the boys, even Koi, were stretched out on the poles of their house. This precaution was necessary, for it would not have done to let them see how easily the lock could be forced, or I might have made thieves of the lot. I soon had Ward laid out on an elevated platform of poles, cursing under my blanket as well as his own. I was just about to pour him his whisky, when I heard sounds of excitement from the boys' house.

Stepping outside, I saw that they were pouring out and looking toward the end of the track. I say end, for we were on the edge of a tremendous gorge, into which the track dropped squarely out of sight. I stopped to watch as well, my mouth as widely open as that of the callowest youth. For one doesn't meet strangers very often in the New Guinea bush and nothing else could have aroused such intense interest. Someone was coming. Suddenly, a mule appeared above the edge of the chasm carrying a powerful native. I knew he was no local boy, for he was very black and had no word for our Mekeo troop. But this may have been due to fright at meeting us, for his eyes popped from their sockets. This feeling was quickly transmitted to our own boys, some of the more timid of whom began to edge toward their house.

I stepped forward at this juncture, to the evident relief of the black man. He slid off his mule and looked at me rather hopefully. I had no expectation that he could understand but asked him in English, as a matter of form, who he was. He replied, surprisingly, "*Taubada* come." *Taubada* was enough for the boys—they cleared for the house. Only Koi remained, for he had grasped the situation at once and volunteered the information, "Muley-man come." Yes, of course! The muley-man! Koi had more sense than I—I should have known at once. And what a predicament! Five minutes more, and he would have been there to unlock the door for me. Now I was caught red-handed after having forced the lock and poor Ward was stretched out inside to prove it.

I had no time for regrets or to plan excuses, for there was a clatter of stones from the hidden track and up came two mules ridden by startled boys, followed by a third animal, carrying the muley-man himself. Calmly he dismounted, quietly he shook hands. No need to ask his race or business. Every book of Australia is full of him. The tall, rangy, blue-eyed, hard-bitten mule-skinner of the back stations. His name was Jack Seymour. Not the man for easy explanations.

Hoping that he took my red embarrassment for honest pleasure, I cast about for an idea that would help present my case in the best light. Then I thought of the whisky bottle, already uncorked. No Australian ever refused a drink. Would he have a spot? Yes, he would. Leading the way into the little veranda, I manœuvred its rightful owner to a position where his back was toward the partly open door. With trembling hands, I poured a stiff dose into a pannikin. The muley-man tossed it off without a quiver, sighed with satisfaction and shouted for his boys to bring some water—our own had not yet had time to visit the nearby spring.

And now I could put off my confession no longer. Haltingly, I explained that Ward was down with fever, that we had had a hard time making Dieni, that we had no key, that I had forced the lock. Then I knew he must have understood from the first, for he smiled quietly, reminded me that I was undoubtedly guilty of house breaking and acquitted me with the statement that "all is fair in the bush." Jack Seymour was a good sort, typical of his breed, and I have no doubt he would have been as kindly without the spot. Still, I was very glad I had thought to suggest it.

He inspected Ward, groaning under his wraps, helped administer his whisky, advised what seemed to me a whopping dose of quinine and further prescribed plenty of hot tea. Koi soon had this ready and a large pannikin of the scalding liquid was poured down the throat of the unresisting patient. Food he could not take, so Jack and I had supper in the veranda. My guest accepted a share of my tin of bullamacow but refused my ship's biscuit. Instead, he produced a carefully cherished bit of damper bread, which had been boiled in a cloth, like a dumpling. I was very envious but managed to restrain my greed.

The meal finished, Seymour announced his intention of leaving at once, in the hope of getting down to Kubuna before the rain set in. The troop set out without further delay but I doubt if they beat the rain which soon began to fall with tropic persistence.

After a glance at Ward, who was now trying to doze, I went outside for a look. Dieni lies in a little natural amphitheatre, the mountains rising sharply away on three sides. On the fourth, the track drops down the side of the magnificent chasm. When we arrived, the high mountains on the far side were visible but now all was hidden in a bank of heavy mist, which gave me the impression of standing on the edge of a boiling cauldron. There was no sound from the forest, except for the *cra-cra*-ing of a rifle-bird, on the knoll at the south side of the clearing.

Rain was beginning to fall and as the elevation here is about eleven hundred feet, it was very cold. The ricey delegation called and departed with no word, shivering in its blankets. I hunted out my beloved sweater, donned it for the first time, and sat down to consider. Here was Ward, flat and helpless, undoubtedly down for a long illness. Even if we should be able to go on after a few days, our food would be low, for we had counted on obtaining provisions at native villages along the way, and these had failed to materialize. Jack Seymour had added to my depression with the information that for miles there was no village large enough to spare us food. Ward apparently desperately ill, a food shortage in prospect, several boys crocked, the cold, clammy rain! An entry in my journal summarizes these facts of interest, and ends on a note of hope and confidence. I must have been trying to cheer myself up, for everything indicated that we had got as far as we were going.

Next morning, however, the prospects looked much better, as so often happens on bright, sunny mornings. Rain and mist had disappeared, and the chilly air was crystal clear. The boys were singing in their house, with occasional peeps outside to see how chances were for ricey. Cautiously, I approached Ward, who seemed still to be asleep. He heard me, however, and immediately leaped to his feet, pronounced himself as good as ever, and demanded breakfast. I could hardly believe my eyes and for an instant thought him delirious. But his words were quite true—he *was* as good as ever, as he amply proved that day before the end of a hard march. It was my first real experience with malaria. Ward could be prostrated at night and sound as a bell next morning.

After breakfast, we called the boys for a start and when they had been rounded up, we were surprised to find that they, too, had made some excellent recoveries. All were able to take their proper loads again, so that Koi was relieved from carrying. This sort of thing is entirely typical of New Guinea. Always seemingly insurmountable obstacles appear, so that one is constantly certain that everything is finished. But equally always—or almost equally!—solutions are found and things work themselves out.

From Dieni, the track zigzags down the side of the precipice, then strikes off, in a general northeasterly direction, along its side. The way is narrow, rough and stony, crossed at short intervals by small streams of clear cold water, working down from the heights above. After a march of about three hours, including one or two short spells, we dropped down into a small valley. This is known as Fofofofo and was once the site of a fairly large village. Unfortunately, this village had been broken up into two small groups, each of which had removed so far from the track that we could not locate it.

From Fofofofo, we went up and up, until it seemed that we could go no higher. At the top of a last stiff climb, we came again to the edge of a very steep descent. This time the track went down and down, twisting and turning to choose the shortest passable route. At length, in the bottom of a deep ravine, we came to a small but swift and roaring river. Though hardly more than twenty feet wide, it was a formidable barrier, the spray dashing high over mossy rocks, soaked and slippery. There was a native suspension bridge, rickety but possibly serviceable. Carrying the three-barrelled gun, now our particular *bête noire,* Ward assayed a crossing. He had hardly got his full weight over the water, when I saw that the shore anchor was giving away. The bridge was very high, the rocks below were jagged. I shouted and Ward, quick to comprehend, made a lightning twist, dropping on his face, with his head toward shore. Gingerly, but as speedily as he could, he crawled along the sagging footway, until I could grasp his free hand and drag him to safety. We decided not to use the bridge.

While we debated another means of crossing, the boys arrived. Holding their loads high, they plunged in without hesitation and staggered across, often nearly up to their shoulders in tumbling water. Neither Ward nor I wanted a soaking, I on general principles and Ward because it would be bound to bring on an attack of fever. Now only Koi, for once lacking useful suggestions, was left with us. He did offer to carry us over on his back, one at a time, but this we knew he could not do.

We were now joined by a native man, accompanied by a pretty little girl about eight. They were shy, but not frightened, and the man addressed Koi in a language strange to me. Koi proved himself a linguist of parts by engaging him in a lengthy and voluble conversation, not one word of which was comprehensible to either Ward or me. Having apparently threshed out every possible topic of conversation, Koi finally informed us that this man was the policeman of Madiu, the local district (there being no tangible Madiu, he must have found his duties light!), He was going to a dance at Mafulu and was taking his daughter with him. Mafulu! True symbol of romance in New Guinea! I never hoped to see this far, mysterious place, but here was a quiet little man, armed with a stick, going there for a dance.

I knew the man for a member of the Kuni tribe and looked at him with renewed interest. He was a little chap, hardly more than five feet tall, dark brown in color, the shade much deeper than Koi's. His hair was covered with a rough turban of dirty tapa cloth, emblem of the mountain man. He wore the blue uniform *rami* of the police, covering him from waist to knee. Ordinarily, of course, he would be reluctant to visit Mafulu, certainly when escorted only by a small daughter. But as I learned later, the Mafulu dance was a very large affair, to which neighboring peoples from miles around were invited. Except in occasional cases of cold-blooded treachery, invited guests at such affairs are quite safe and feuds are temporarily put aside.

I made a mental note of this dance, for these purely social ceremonies are among the finest and most interesting sights New Guinea has to offer. The prospect of such an event is a common topic of conversation among the natives and it is impossible to be with them long without hearing of local or neighboring projects. I had not been long in Mekeo when I began to hear talk of dances. I learned that Eboa, a village about two miles to the north of Inawaia, had one in prospect. There was nothing definite and there seemed every chance that it would not materialize before I left New Guinea. I was as unlikely to see it as I was to witness this one at Mafulu. Yet I was distinctly excited, for one never knows.

Koi and the little policeman now engaged in further conversation, their glances and gestures indicating that our immediate problem was under discussion. Presently, Koi turned and explained that they would carry us across. Our new friend was already tucking his *rami* into his belt, and without further ado they made a seat of their hands, as children do, and squatted behind Ward. He settled himself rather doubtfully but in no time he was safely across. I was a little more difficult because of my somewhat greater weight. There was much staggering and stumbling, but no casualties resulted. When the policeman had returned and brought over the child, we all set out on the stiffest climb I had so far experienced. While the descent to the river had been fairly gradual, the ascent on the other side seemed to me practically perpendicular. I do not know the elevation at the river but I should think we must have climbed quite twenty-five hundred feet before we reached the top. I know I had to stop several times to blow, feeling greatly shamed by such a breach of custom. Even the child was surprised that I should be so brazen.

The reward was worth the effort, for when we finally reached the upper level, we saw spread before us a magnificent panorama of towering mountains and deep shadowy valleys, stretching away—range after range, each higher than the other, dark, enticing, mysterious. Before, I had known well enough we were getting higher into the mountains but only because my aching bones and my barometer said so. We were always so hemmed in by the forest that we could see nothing beyond our immediate surroundings. Now I saw why the way had been so rough, for we were at an elevation of four thousand feet, or a little more, and were able to look from peak to peak.

We were standing on the neck of a little spur, extending sharply outward from the side of the mountain. Toward its pointed tip were the rough buildings of the famous

Dilava Mission, some hanging on the very edges of the precipitous sides. The time was beyond noon but the atmosphere was still fairly clear. At the left, beyond and behind the Mission houses, we could see the rounded contours of Virjus Dome, the bare, granite patches on its sides gleaming in the sun. In the centre, were the slim, eccentric spires of the Navarre Needles, and high above them, faint in the misty distance, was Mount Yule. To the right, ridge after ridge, reaching higher and higher, finally merged with the great mountains of the Main Range. Wisps of white, filmy mist drifted slowly along the faces of the nearer mountains, marking the course of the upper waters of the Angabunga River.

Gazing at this scene of splendor, I forgot my fatigue. My feet, weighted with caked clay and water absorbed by the woollen puttees I had foolishly put on, seemed suddenly lighter. I had planned long and worked hard to see these mountains and here they were, far more wonderful than I had dreamed they could be. As I gazed, I thrilled at the thought of the mysteries of human and animal life, safely hidden, yet within the compass of my eyes. Fierce tribes of cannibals, proudly unbowed to the white man's yoke; beautiful and curious birds, awaiting discovery by a fortunate collector. Many years will pass before these forbidding fastnesses yield their last "new species."

Fired with fresh enthusiasm, I shouted for the camera boy, Maino. While the jaded carriers rested, I meant to take advantage of what might be the only opportunity to film this striking scene. With trembling fingers, I loosed the little movie camera from its intricate bindings of bush rope. Awkwardly, I inserted a roll of film and sighting upon the great Dome, I pressed the release button. There was a brief whirr, then silence. The camera had jammed!

It was too much. Suddenly, I became again very tired and set about restowing young Maino's load, with a deep feeling of defeat. Already the boys were taking up their loads; soon even Maino disappeared up the track and only Ward and I remained.

We still had some way to go and set out doggedly. We found ourselves following the deeply convoluted face of a great mountain, the track seeming barely to avoid slipping away altogether. Rounding a sudden curve, we could look across a narrow, deep declivity to the next point. Confidently, we would swing into the dark face of the mountain, only to find that a half hour's steady plodding was required to reach the projection that had seemed so near. Slowly the afternoon wore away, in what seemed like fruitless effort. My soggy feet grew harder to lift and finally, when we stopped to drink from a trickling brooklet, I knew I was finished. I persuaded Ward to go on, for the boys must already have reached their destination and would want looking after.

After a rest of quite fifteen or twenty minutes, I managed to drag myself to my feet and resume the march. How long I took I do not know but eventually I reached camp about 4:30, having taken nine hours to cover a distance we estimated at about seventeen miles. To crawl exhausted into the crowd of staring boys was a humiliating experience but I was too tired to care very much. After a cup of hot tea, proffered by Koi, I crept to a shelf of Heaven-sent poles and slept until morning, without a glance at our surroundings.

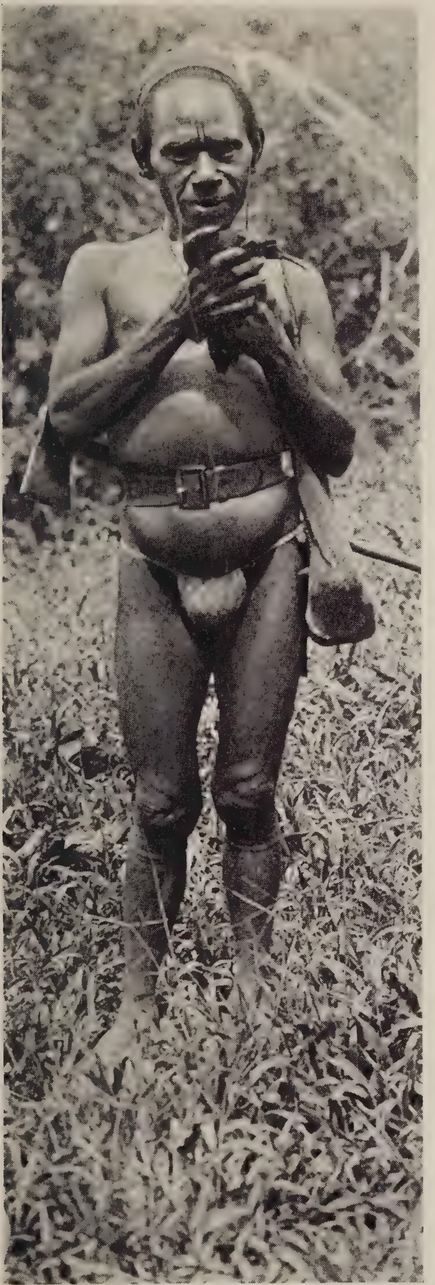
The sun was shining brightly when I woke and the boys were already at breakfast, happily gulping their beloved rice. I was stiff and lame after my exertions of the day before but somehow I felt that I had come through the worst of it. From then on I should be able to do better.

The camp was located on a grassy spur, overhanging the edge of a great valley but the view was cut off by the tops of tall forest trees whose roots were far below. The point is known officially as Matsika but to the natives it is Valia—also pronounced variously as Varlia, Vali and Wali. It is Valia because high on the side of the mountain behind it hangs a tiny village of this name—or these names!

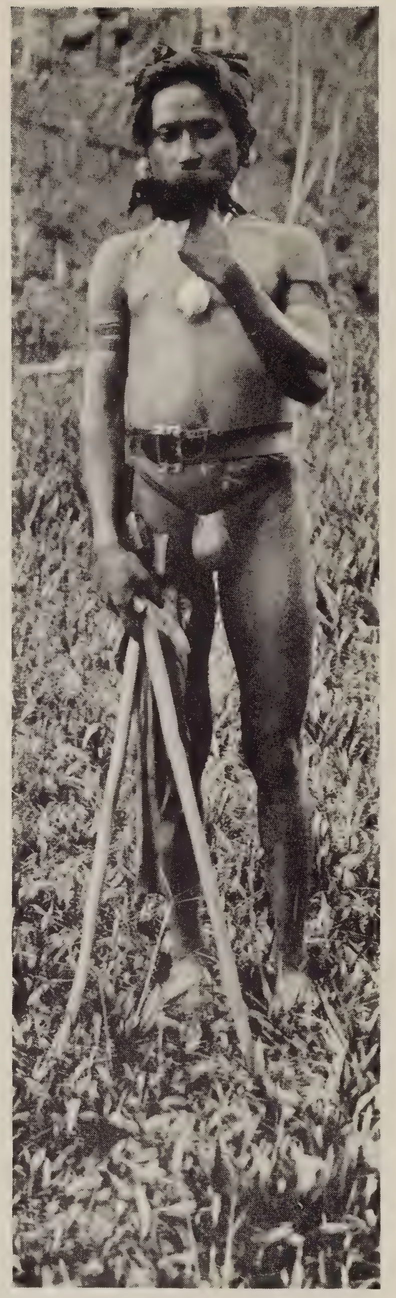
Valia represented the limit of the muley-man's efforts at that time and in the house were stored twenty bags of rice. How we wished we might have just one! But in New Guinea, property rights are as sacred to the white man as they are to the native and I do not think it even occurred to us to do more than desire.

I do not wish Jack Seymour any bad luck but I cannot restrain the hope that he felt the need to return to Australia before he urged the cutting feet of his mules farther up the track. Before I left New Guinea, I did hear a rumor that the far patrol station at Kambisi, Jack's ultimate objective, was to be discontinued. If so, the track may have been saved. For beyond Valia the path is what a mountain foot-way should be, without the hoof-lashed quagmires that mar it lower down.

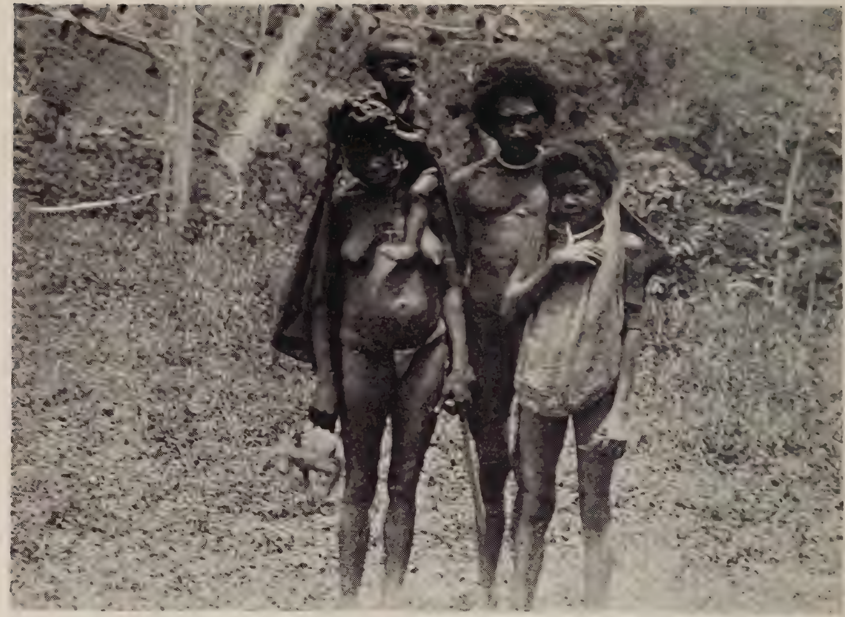
After about an hour, we came to the skirts of Mount Kebea, a lovely, heavily wooded peak about six thousand feet high. Soon we were passing along its northern flank, the track twisting and turning around deep ravines, much as it had done the day before among the lesser mountains. We were now in true bird of paradise country. Count Raggi's was calling constantly, both above and below us. Frequently, we heard the thin, squeaky notes of the magnificent bird of paradise. Twice we noted the velvet black forms of lesser superb birds of paradise, as they darted across the track. As I came abruptly around a sharp cor-



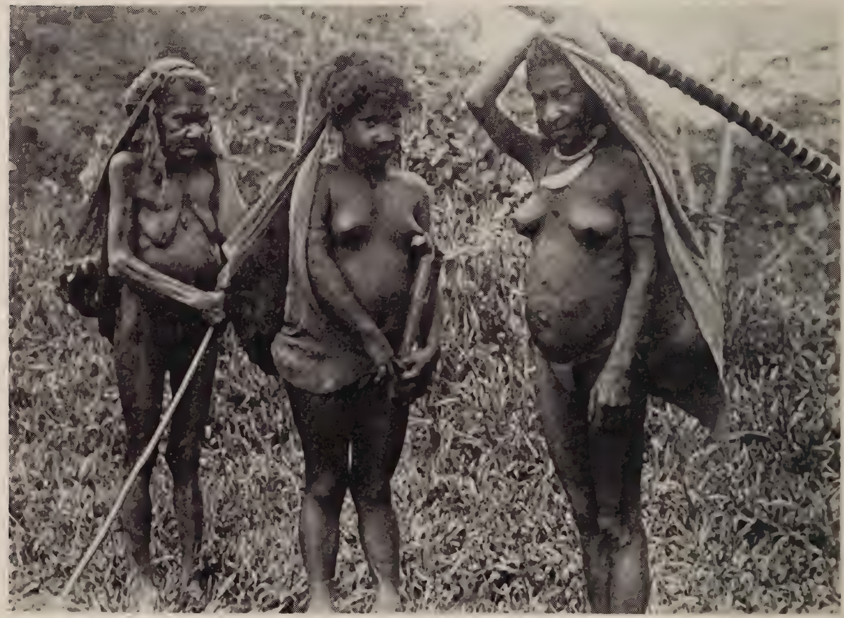
KUNI BIRD–CATCHER BRINGING IN A GARDENER BOWER–BIRD.



DEVA–DEVA NATIVE HOLDING SIX–PLUMED BIRD OF PARADISE.



KUNI FAMILY.



THREE GENERATIONS OF KUNI WOMEN.

ner, I was nearly struck in the face by a flying form rushing toward me. It swerved off just in time, so close that I saw only a swirl of black feathers. But Ward, who was enough behind to get a good view, pronounced it a male of Lawes' six-plumed bird of paradise.

Like horses nearing their stable, we were all full of spirit and pressed on eagerly, for this was our last day's march. We had reached the heights and now the track was fairly level, with only moderate ups and downs. This was pleasant going after the rough work we had done before and we stopped only once for a fifteen minutes' spell. While we sat sprawled about a small, fairly open space, there came a sweet, warbling whistle, then a flash of red and green, and a lovely king parrakeet, accompanied by his less brilliant mate, alighted in a low tree only a few feet away. Usually, a troop of carriers at rest make a continuous uproar of shouts, laughter and singing, well calculated to frighten away any forest sprites within hearing. But now, by chance, they were quite silent and for an instant the birds did not see us. We were treated to a pretty bit of love-making, for the cock brought up from his crop a dainty morsel, with which he fed the hen, after the fashion of mating parrots the world over. This was all a matter of seconds, for at the shout of a boy with no eye for such matters, the love-smitten pair took flight and dashed at great speed along the opening made by the truck, the scarlet body and green wings and tail of the cock flashing as he went.

We had been going steadily almost due east in passing Kebea. Near its end we came to another deep valley, running in a general north and south direction at right angles to the one we had been skirting. On the east, it was shut in by a rim of great mountains, presenting an almost unbroken contour against the sky. Far below, the

Aya River raced northward to join the Angabunga. At the end where we had approached it, the valley widened and from its floor, entirely cut off from the surrounding mountains, rose a symmetrical, cone-shaped peak, with a twin-tipped, saddle-shaped top. On each of these points there is a village, the whole being known as Iola. We could look directly across at Iola, being almost on the same level, and could plainly see the little houses nestled under the trees. It can be reached, after a hard climb, by a track going around to the right. But we were bound for Deva-deva, which lies on the edge of the valley to the north, so we made a sharp turn to the left, along a sharp-edged ridge, which brought us on to the mountain that rimmed the western edge of the valley.

We were as keen now as hounds on a hot scent and the end of our march resulted in an impromptu race. Ward and I, with no burdens but our cursed shotgun and my khaki jacket, managed to forge ahead of the boys, although two teams, perhaps with lighter loads than the others, pressed us hard. As we tore around a sharp turn, going at top speed, we came face to face with a dark, squat mountain woman, quite naked save for a scanty gee-string. She stopped in her tracks, her mouth open, her eyes protruding in sudden terror and unbelief. Then she turned and fled up the track without a word.

We were not long now in reaching our destination, a little rest-house on the usual grassy spur, overhanging the valley. It was a beautiful spot, the elevation being about forty-five hundred feet. Directly opposite was the towering mountain wall of the eastern side of the valley. To the right, and still on almost the same level, was Iola, the end house of the nearer village plainly visible under a clump of tall trees. Down its sloping flanks were garden patches, cleared in the virgin jungle, a wisp or two of lazy smoke indicating new activities. From all directions we could hear the ringing calls of birds of paradise, which were very abundant.

The spur on which the rest-house was located must itself have been the site of a native village at one time or another, for it was covered with grass, which usually pushes in after a once-occupied clearing has been deserted.

We were a little disappointed to find that the rest-house was not in the village, as we had expected it would be. After we had stowed our gear and examined our immediate surroundings, we began to realize that the natives we had hoped to make friends with were strangely absent. However, on the mountain side above us was a large garden; smoke arose from the bush at its upper margin. Still higher, we could see the tip of the mountain, fringed with tall trees. Ward said they hid the thriving village of Deva-deva. So we did not really worry about the apparent scarcity of natives.

We got Koi out to shout up to Deva-deva and across to Iola, in the high-pitched voice that carries so far in the New Guinea mountains. He told them we were hungry and wanted food. There was no reply.

CHAPTER V

BIRDS OF PARADISE

Early in the afternoon of our arrival at Deva-deva, rain began to fall heavily. This is the usual thing in the New Guinea mountains, wet season or dry. It may begin at noon, it may hold off until four, but during our entire stay, there were not more than two or three completely clear days. Curiously enough, these came together and just at a time when rain would have been disastrous. Once the afternoon rain had begun, I never knew it to stop until some time during the night. The mornings are almost always clear and cold. Only once did it rain in the morning and that occasion, too, was the only time I knew it to cease during the day time.

About four o'clock, we heard loud shouts. Coming down the spur from the main track were a wrinkled and withered old fellow, a younger man who appeared to be his son and a young woman, the latter's wife. The young people were shy but the old man came forward, grinning, and greeted Ward as the "*manu•taubada*" (bird man). He must have been a young buck at the time of Ward's last visit, but at any rate his memory was good. He assured us that "plenty boys stop" and "plenty food stop," all of this, of course, through Koi. He was a friendly old chap and for a moment I felt that his assurances would see us out of our difficulties. But then I remembered the old man who had greeted us at Jesubaiboa with similar promises and immediately I discounted the good intentions of the mountaineer. Expressions of good will and assurances of food and help are matters of custom in New Guinea. No one expects them to be lived up to.

However, we took advantage of the opportunity to display some of our trade goods, under the protecting roof of the veranda. Bulging eyes and expressions of "Ah!" and "*Lupiana!*" (beautiful) were occasioned by knives with brass-bound handles and bolts of turkey-red calico. When our visitors left, bearing small gifts of salt and tobacco, they gave us a few sweet potatoes and some sugar-cane, a food very popular among the mountain people. Later in the evening, two other small families appeared, bringing us more potatoes, which we paid for with salt. We again displayed our trade goods and explained that we would give them in exchange for birds. All looked on with appraising and approving eyes. Yes, they would bring us many birds. For salt, cloth and tobacco, they would bring us much food. The little they had left us saved the boys from being as hungry as they would otherwise have been, for we had no more rice to give them.

At dawn next morning, the three Bioto boys were ready to go back. They had agreed to carry us up, and that task completed, had no further obligations. We gave them each four shillings for four days' carrying and an extra shilling for food, though Heaven knows where they were to buy it. Each also received a bit of calico for a new *sihi*, two sticks of tobacco and a few wax Vesta matches. They departed feeling well paid and so they had been. We were feeling fairly generous at the moment.

A very few minutes later, we felt less kindly, for a hang-dog delegation of carriers came to us saying that, because there was no food, they wished to return. We did not want them to go, of course, and since there was no proper food to give them, we directed Koi to mete out one of our precious biscuits to each and to boil a kerosene tin of our scanty stock of tea. This pacified them for a while but at noon they appeared again. We could hold them no longer. They knew as well as we that since so little food had been brought in, we probably were in for a thin time. Much as we wanted to retain our carriers, our only hope of getting back to Mekeo, we could not keep them without food. We could not go back with them, after having managed to get to our collecting ground. Much better to let them go and risk getting out somehow.

The leader of this dissatisfied crew soon proved to be our old friend Pock-mark, who had so nearly coaxed Ward into wrecking us at Aropokena. When we had lined up the boys to question them one at a time as to their intentions, it was Pock-mark who was spokesman. It was evident that nine of the always reluctant Inawaibui boys composed the malcontents. The Iron Man, life of the party until now, wavered. He did not want to go but a subtle allegiance to Inawaibui, perhaps the future wife, drew him. Pock-mark saw his hesitation and stepped into the breech with a few words, evidently well chosen, which quickly ended the Iron Man's indecision. There were tears in his eyes when he took his place with the other nine, each carrying his blanket. We gave them their shilling a day and a biscuit apiece, and they departed in haste, eager to get as far as possible before night. Fourteen boys remained loyal. Among them were the Wise Boy and the Inawaibui Maino, both, for some reason, exempt from the ties that bound the other boys who came from their village. Quite possibly it was a matter of clans.

Soon after the deserters had left, the Madiu policeman came along. This time he escorted a small troop of mountain people, as well as his little daughter. All were wearing their ornaments and were well daubed with color, for they were bound for the dance at Mafulu. I asked our friend the policeman to wait until I could dash off a note to the emergency Government outpost at Kambisi. This station was under the direction of Assistant Magistrate Champion, son of the Government Secretary. Kambisi is far to the southeast of Deva-deva and therefore much nearer the coast, though it is reached, circuitously, via Mafulu. My mind was on the rice at Matsika—just two bags! It was a shot in the dark, for the note probably would never reach Champion, and if it did, he would be unlikely to give us rice brought up with such effort. Even if he were willing, word could hardly get back in time to help us. On the other hand, there was just the bare chance that it might work out. Soon the policeman was bound for Mafulu, holding before him a cleft stick, in which the note was held fast.

We were not long without company, for presently a small boy arrived, carrying a closed basket, roughly and quickly made of twisted vines. From it he produced our first bird, a beautiful, highly iridescent pigeon of large size, with a white throat. We quickly fitted up one of our cages and transferred the bird to it. Unfortunately, we had nothing to feed it at the time but it was quite fearless, drinking readily. The boy received a trade mirror and went happily off. Each morning during our stay, this lad brought us a pigeon of some sort. He must have gathered enough small knives and mirrors to last him and his family a lifetime.

The boys were beginning to hang about now, sheepishly rubbing their stomachs. I could not blame them and it was a great relief to us all when several women appeared, bringing us a few potatoes and some cane. Best of all was a small bunch of the little bananas typical of the mountains. The former were seized by the boys and carried off to their house, amid shouts. The bananas we kept for bird food, as we knew fruit would be hard to get. As a matter of fact, October is an off time for mountain bananas, which at other seasons are plentiful enough. Our pigeon was soon gorging small cubes of fruit and from that moment never looked back.

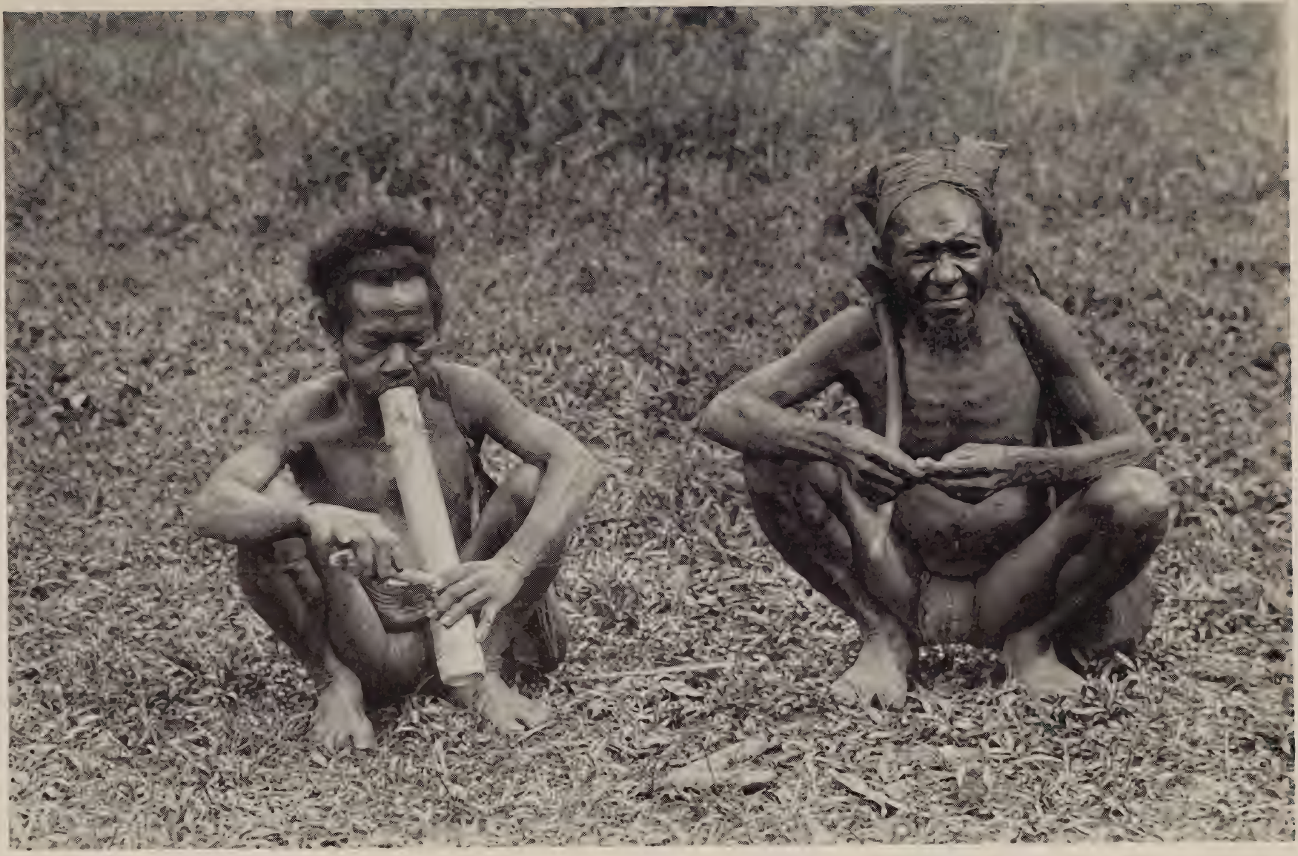
Toward evening we were visited by quite a crowd, bringing us more food, this time including several of the small, squash-like pumpkins of the mountains. These the boys disdained but we quietly tucked them away, with a thought of the morning. In the party were two men carrying baskets, one containing a female six-plumed bird of paradise, the other a female superb. They were our first birds of paradise and naturally we were delighted to see them. Each man received the promised equivalent in trade, with a stick of tobacco thrown in, together with the admonition that we wanted males, not females.

The remaining boys sang loud and long that night. Their stomachs, for once, were full to bursting, for we could make certain that they had wolfed every atom of the food that had been brought in. We knew that they had left nothing for the morning and that we should have to share with them the few potatoes we had put aside for ourselves. There would be no let-up in these insatiable appetites, no satisfying the native's eternal craving for food.

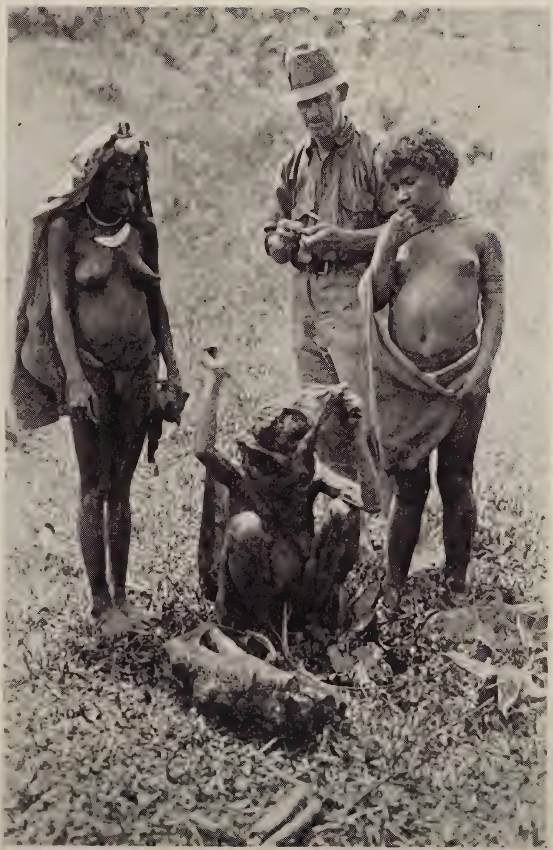
Even Koi, bulging with sweet potatoes and taro, was getting off a wail of his own, as he poked little twigs into the fire over which our tea was brewing. I asked him what his song was and this is his translation:

"*Taubada* come, Koi go mountains,
Wifey, you no cry.
Me glad to go mountains,
Me like him too much!"

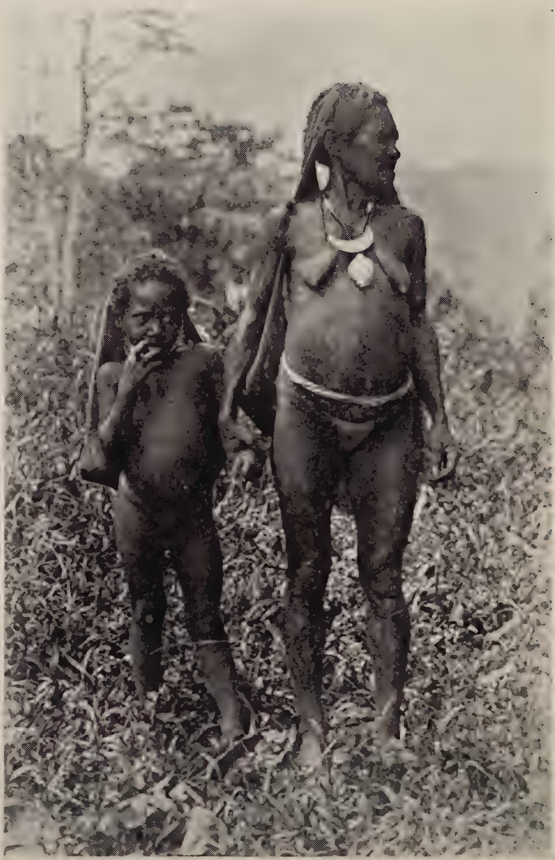
"Too much," of course, is the pidgin idiom for "very much." Koi had worked out this song in the usual native



KUNI PATRIARCHS. THE MAN AT THE LEFT IS SMOKING A NATIVE PIPE.



WARD BUYING FOOD FROM DEVA-DEVA WOMEN.



KUNI MOTHER AND CHILD.

fashion, whining his thoughts in a dreary sort of monotone, until they began to take definite form. He then fastened on the words, realizing that he had made a song, and repeated them over and over, with all the zest of a poet. He was homesick, of course, like all natives away from their own villages. With his belly full, he naturally liked the mountains too much and was reassuring his spirit against the time when it might be empty. He wouldn't like the mountains too much then.

The bunk poles at Deva-deva were as twisted and knotty as any but we filled in some of the chinks with turkey red and empty rice bags. The nights were very cold, often going well down into the 50's (Fahrenheit) and we slept under our blankets, with whatever we could find piled on top.

Promptly at daylight, as we had expected, the boys were on hand for their share of our little supply of vegetables. This they polished off in no time, and before long again appeared in a body. This time the Inawaibui Wise Boy acted as spokesman. Since leaving his village, we had heard from him no word of English. Now, under the stimulus of a great idea, he had no need of an interpreter. For the second time in our acquaintance, he showed himself to possess a far more fluent pidgin than Koi's. Ward and I stood amazed as he explained, rapidly and clearly, that he would take five boys, return to Inawaia, secure two of the large eighty-pound mats of rice we had left there and bring them up to us. He would also try to enlist the services of other boys, to come up and help carry us back to Mekeo.

Ward and I retired to the shelter of the veranda to discuss this plan, so wild and so improbable of success that it had never even occurred to us. We could not fathom the Wise Boy and so could not bring ourselves to trust him fully. The really remarkable knowledge of pidgin that he showed when he wished and his failure to understand the simplest order when he did not wish made us suspicious. This boy must have had a long experience either in a Mission or on a plantation, and such boys are likely to be tricky. They learn that petty thievery and lying are usually punished by nothing worse than a scolding, when the victim is a white man, and not by the severe retribution of their own people. We had every reason to believe that this boy was one of these and that once he was in possession of our rice, there would be feasts in Mekeo, while starvation would be likely to reign at Deva-deva.

On the other hand, if they did eat our rice, what of it? We should be no worse. And there was just the chance that it might come off. With what was left of one hundred sixty pounds of rice, even after a troop of boys had eaten their way back to the mountains, we ought to be fairly right. Also, it was now perfectly obvious that the small amount of native food the neighboring people could spare would not feed fourteen boys. With half-starved carriers, we should be worse off than with none at all.

We were not long in making a decision and accepting the Wise Boy's proposition. We promised double pay to each boy, provided they carried out their agreement and returned with the rice. The whole scheme had evidently been prearranged, for there was no wrangling as to which ones were to go. Blankets and shoulder bags of personal treasures had been cached behind the house, and in a jiffy the relief party was lined up again for final instructions. But now, to our surprise, there were seven instead of six. Quick inquiry brought the information that the extra boy was one who had wished to leave with the deserters the day before, but since he did not belong to Inawaibui, he had hesitated to go with them. There was nothing to do but let him go, if he wished. We gave each boy two biscuits and six sticks of tobacco with which to buy food—if they could find any to buy!—and watched them depart on the homeward track. We had little hope that we should ever see them again.

Now, besides Koi, only six boys remained and we had the opportunity to observe them as individuals, rather than as mere carriers. Maino from Inawaibui and Maino, young son of Koi's "sissi," as well as the hard-faced man from Bioto, had already impressed themselves upon us. But we had not previously realized that all of the three others were real personalities. One was a man from Eboa, rather older than most of the others—I should say that he and Bioto were each somewhere about thirty-five. While most native men no longer young are subject to bulging abdomens, this chap was particularly afflicted. We called him Guts. He was greatly pleased with this name and would always come up grinning happily when we shouted for him. Guts was a pleasant, good-natured fellow, who remained our sincere friend even after he had left our employ. He and Bioto always teamed together and no younger combination could out-carry them.

The second of this trio was Okoa, slender lad of Inawaia. Okoa was no more than eighteen and like many other light-colored boys, he was almost as pretty as a girl. Once he had overcome his natural shyness, he loved to joke and banter with Ward and myself, but never overstepped the line that must be drawn for the sake of discipline. No girl, black or white, could out-giggle Okoa.

And now we come to the sixth member of our little troop. He was a very black fellow, who lived in Inawaia. We never learned his name and called him, cruelly but pointedly, Silly. Silly was not quite right mentally and the other boys made him the butt of many jokes. His objection to this foolery was first noisy and then belligerent, so that in order to keep peace, we had to put a stop to it. We soon discovered, however, that our village idiot was not quite so stupid as he seemed and was entirely able to take care of himself.

When the regular weekly ration of three sticks of tobacco was handed out, there was no increase in smoking. Boys continued to hang about us, in the thin hope of cadging a smoke. Finally, this became so annoying that we had Koi investigate. He reported that Silly never smoked himself and when the other boys had carelessly finished their own supply, he would make them advances from his hoarded stock, at exorbitant rates. Consequently, on *kuku* day, everyone had to turn over to the usurer the whole of his three sticks. Possessed of wealth almost untold, the former butt became the most respected man in camp.

Boys on the track are an indispensable asset, worth their weight in—well, certainly worth their ten shillings a month. In camp, they become not only useless but a terrible burden, for those appalling appetites must be satisfied. Where two meals daily had been enough on the track, they now appeared at noon, doggedly insisting on at least a few pumpkins. I had once supposed that our own boys in camp would be a great help. I pictured them setting traps in the neighboring bush, bringing in rare and desirable birds, as well as scouring the vicinity for food. But long before we reached Deva-deva, I was disillusioned. Except to fetch water from a spring one hundred yards away, the boys were too frightened to leave camp. They spent their entire time either in their own house, or hanging about ours, hoping for food or tobacco. This, of course, is due not only to the general fear of alien people but to respect for the unwritten Papuan law of territory. Our boys would no more think of catching birds in the hunting-grounds of Deva-deva than they would of raiding the mountain gardens.

But we had little time to regret the inability of Mekeo boys to work as collectors in the mountains. Hardly had the ricey expedition left when two young local men appeared, bringing a male six-plumed bird of paradise. It was a beautiful creature, the first living specimen I had ever seen at close range, and I examined it with enthusiastic interest. Except for an iridescent, bronze-green shield on its breast, a narrow, shining band across its nape and a white spot on its nose, its entire plumage was an intense, impenetrable black. The feathers had a soft, velvet quality, and its eyes were bright China blue. From the crown of the head extended six slender shafts, each about six inches long and entirely denuded of vane except at the tip, where there was a round black spatula.

Not until long afterward, when we were safely back in New York, did I realize the full beauty of the six-plumed bird of paradise. Then I saw its courtship dance and learned why it requires no dazzling flank plumes. Drawing itself erect, the dancer spreads the long, velvety feathers of its back and raises them, fan-shaped, at right angles to its body. The feathers of the lower breast and abdomen are similarly erected to complete the circle, so that the bird resembles a rather short man, with his head poked through a large, spread umbrella. The dance begins, in slow, short hops, two feet right, two feet left, and back again. Now the six plumes are seen at their best, for the head moves rapidly from side to side with a rhythmic motion, which causes the little tabs to bob madly at the ends of their slim supports. As a finale, the body is thrown forward into a horizontal position and the bobbing of the head increases in speed until the movements of the plumes can no longer be followed. There is a flap of wings, the body feathers are lowered and the dance is over.

Ward observed my excitement with a tolerant smile, for he had known well enough that securing the birds was only the beginning of our problem, and that getting them out of the mountains would be another matter. Before the day was out we had received two more male six-plumes, as well as two or three of the species known as the magnificent bird of paradise. The male is a lovely little bird, hardly as large as an American robin. The entire breast is a vivid, shining green, shot through with a flush of golden bronze. Down the centre of the throat runs a patch of feathers set off with narrow, highly iridescent cross-bars. The upper parts of the magnificent always seem to me like something that just failed to work out. The head is plain light brown but from the nape springs a beautiful, straw-yellow hood, which is erected when the bird displays. The back is a nondescript mixture of maroon and brown, while each wing is adorned with a large and conspicuous patch of orange yellow. The two central tail feathers, very narrow and about nine inches long, are a brilliant metallic green. They extend backward, well beyond the tail proper, then curve out and forward, making two almost complete semicircles.

In the mountains, magnificents are the most abundant of the birds of paradise, and from the very beginning we had warned everyone that we did not want them, knowing quite well that they would be brought in anyway. They are easily caught by old men and small boys; men in their prime disdain them.

While we were delighted to find birds coming in so well, we were worried because so little food had arrived. As yet, no policeman had appeared. We had inquired for him but had been told that he was at the Mafulu dance, along with his colleague of Iola. If we could only get hold of one or both, we should at least have someone to roar at, and might possibly get the neighborhood stirred up a bit. Our friend from Madiu must have carried to the dance the word of our arrival, for the Deva-deva policeman finally turned up. He was an exceedingly black individual, small, but tremendously muscled. He was also exceedingly hairy, the exposed portions of his body being well covered with thick, black curls. He spoke only a word or two of Motu and none at all of English. Koi, however, quickly made him understand our needs. After the well-established fashion of policemen, he promised that we should be promptly fed, and announced that he was short of tobacco.

This need having been supplied, the policeman went to the edge of the spur and shouted up to Iola, in a voice so terrific that the previous efforts of Koi seemed feeble in comparison. He called, over and over, a word which sounded to us like *bullamow*. The last syllable of this word is especially suited for emphasis and the policeman got it off with ear-splitting gusto. We supposed this to be an order, carrying dire penalty, and applying both to Deva-deva and Iola. Weeks later, it occurred to me to ask Koi what the policeman really had said. I learned that he was calling the name of the Iola policeman, who both he and everyone else knew quite well was still at Mafulu.

It was easy, now, to understand the mystery of long-distance communication in the mountains of Papua. A voice like that, carrying from peak to peak, could easily be heard in places that could be reached, on foot, only by a week of hard work. I never heard drums or any other device used for signalling. What need, when a voice will serve the purpose?

We got from the policeman a bit of devastating news. There was no village at Deva-deva! We had noticed that no smoke hung above the trees on the ridge behind us but had not thought to inquire. The garden on the side of the mountain was the policeman's own. In the forest, just above it, stood his house. It was the only house, for the old village site was deserted, its former occupants having scattered up and down the valley. This was a hard blow for us. Isolated people meant small gardens and little food to spare for strangers. Now we knew why more had not come in. There wasn't any!

The policeman made little of our concern. His own women would bring us food. Soon after he had left, his mother, a dry and shrunken hag, at the extreme of old age, and his wife, a fine, buxom young woman, came down with a quart or so of potatoes each. The policeman could not have measured our boys' appetites by his own, for any one of them could have eaten the lot.

The rain held off well that evening, so I took advantage of the good weather and a lull in activities to climb up into the policeman's garden to make some photographs of the nearby mountains. I had got the motion-picture camera working again and the distance was so short that the yellow light of afternoon was no handicap. The garden was a large one, probably one hundred yards wide and running up the side of the mountain twice that distance. It was about as nearly perpendicular as a garden could be and still hold soil enough to grow anything. Everything possible for primitive minds and primitive tools had been done to prevent erosion by the constant rains, or at least to delay it long enough for a crop to mature. The space had been cleared, of course, from the bush. All the smaller, easily movable débris had been piled up and burned, but tall stumps, their roots firmly fixed, remained scattered everywhere. Resting against them, in irregular lines, were the larger trunks. These rough ramparts, running across the garden at intervals of several yards, certainly represented a dawning idea of terraces, for, above each of them, loose soil had already become deeply piled.

The garden was not quite ready for planting and here the policeman's wife and the old woman, his mother, worked daily, toiling away with a stone adze and an old trade knife. The location was the usual one in the mountains, where the people always build their houses or villages at the utmost height, for greater safety from enemies, and make their gardens on the dizzy slopes below. The garden from which the policeman's family was being fed was somewhere down the side of the spur on which the rest-house stood. Each morning some feminine member, usually the old woman, scrambled down a crazy little path and returned, after a short time, with a net of potatoes and sugar cane. I once tried this track myself, but after I had got down a little way was glad to scramble back. If I had gone much farther I should have had to be hauled back with a rope.

The view from the garden was even better than from the rest-house, since I could now look over and above it, as it lay almost directly beneath me. Far to the right I could see the rounded slopes of high Kebea, running off into the tall rim that edged the valley. Close at hand was Iola, its twin tips plainly visible. To the left I could follow the course of the Aya River almost to its junction with the Angabunga, known to the Kuni people as the Aduella.

As I watched, enchanted, a party of brown ravens, calling in thin, weak yelps, came sailing along the side of the mountain. They pitched in some small trees at the edge of the garden, then flew down and began poking about in the soft earth. Suddenly one caught sight of me, sounded a croak of alarm, and the flock immediately took flight. They evidently were a family party, for two were very dark in color, three much lighter. The garden was part of their daily round, for after that I saw them nearly every evening at almost the same time.

Two wood swallows, with characteristic beat of broad, sharp wings, were hawking for insects, taking off repeatedly from the dead trees still standing in the garden. As I watched, one struck off, high above the valley, and bore away straight for the distant Aduella. I watched him until I lost him in the distance. His abandoned companion evidenced no concern and was still hawking as I climbed down from my perch on the mountainside, in the twilight.

From the point of view of collections, our fourth day at Deva-deva was filled with excitement. Word had spread through the mountains that the *taubadas* really would give steel knives and even axes for live birds. Villagers and outliers were evidently astir, for soon after dawn they began to come in. Word must have gone out, too, that the little bush-baskets must be used, for always the prizes were carefully enclosed. Treatment as kind as this, of course, is no part of the Papuan idea, for to the natives a bird is only something to eat. They could have had no glimmer of our purpose in gathering such useless creatures and feeding them good bananas. But they could stand it if we could, and rigidly lived up to our regulations.

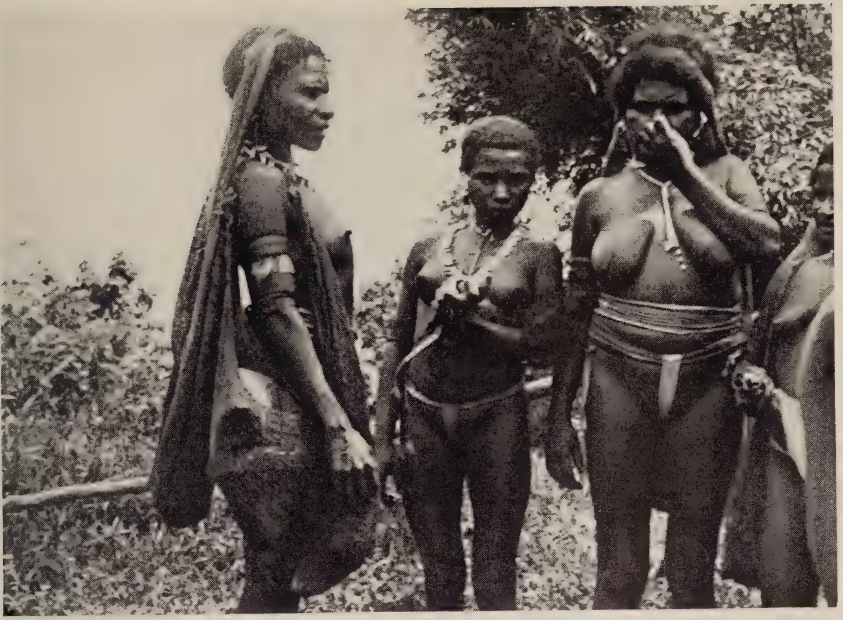
The first arrival was a little cock superb bird of paradise. To me this bird, no larger than the magnificent, is among the most beautiful of all. Like the six-plumed, its plumage is largely black velvet. From the base of the neck hangs a divided cape of thick, ebon feathers, its points extending to within an inch of the end of the tail, so that almost the entire body is covered. The crown glistens with greenish blue, but the most conspicuous decoration is a broad breast-plate of brilliant, scintillating green, showing, in some lights, a hint of both gold and blue. The feathers in the centre of this bib are tiny and scale-like, hardly more than flashing points of light, but they become larger toward the ends, which project outward quite three inches at either side. The owner is able to fold this shield along his flanks if he wishes, but when he is at rest and all is well with the world he ordinarily keeps it well spread.

The display of the lesser superb is really remarkable. He crouches low on his perch, partly spreading his wings and expanding his breast-plate to the utmost. At the same time he erects the cape so that it stands out about his head in a tremendous ruff, the longer feathers at the sides almost meeting in front. He then begins a clumsy sort of dance, slightly ludicrous but still fascinating and filled with a wild, exotic beauty. At intervals he gives voice to a series of thin, harsh screams, opening his mouth very wide and showing the bright yellow lining. The vocal accompaniment would hardly seem an addition to a courtship dance, but the effect on the chosen lady cannot be altogether bad, for the race goes on!

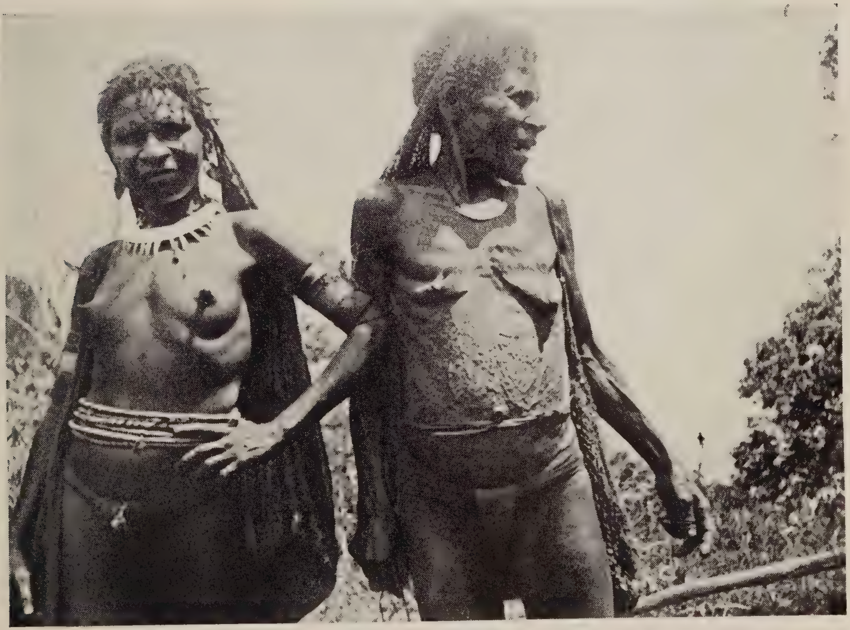
This first superb was brought in by two young men, possibly relatives, but certainly inseparable. Even in Mekeo men always go about and hunt in pairs; in the mountains this rule is even more rigidly followed, for here the danger of possible attack by foreign invaders is a real one. These chaps had visited us once or twice before, bringing nothing, but keeping their eyes open. They must have become convinced that all was as it seemed and had done some hunting of their own. This expedition was their last, however, during our stay, for one of them had sustained two frightful gashes on his left leg, one running from hip to knee, the other from the knee almost to the ankle. He had slipped while setting snares in a tree and had been slashed by a large thorn as he fell. Until the superb had been received and paid for he said nothing of his injury, but he then came forward and asked for *mura-mura* (medicine). In this case, as in many others, ranging from headache to mortal injury, that came to my notice, I never saw anything that indicated even the most primitive idea of medicinal or surgical treatment. The Papuan, in his way, is a fatalist. He lays all his troubles to his enemies, who, by means of *pouri-pouri* (magic), have brought this misfortune upon him. His only remedy is to try to find a stronger *pouri-pouri.* If this fails, he accepts his fate philosophically. I always had the feeling that natives who came to us for the simple treatment we were able to give, came with the idea that they were enlisting the aid of a magician of sorts.

At any rate, I cleaned the boy's wounds, washed them out with an antiseptic solution, bound them up with surgical gauze and adhesive tape, and sent him home. Every day or two thereafter, he came back for treatment, supported by his friend on one side and a long stick on the other. At first, there was some suppuration, but this quickly cleared up and the wounds began to heal. Nine or ten days later, when we were leaving, he came to say good-bye. He still limped a little but he had dispensed with his stick, and his wounds were almost closed and quite clean. An injury so serious would have laid a white man up for weeks.

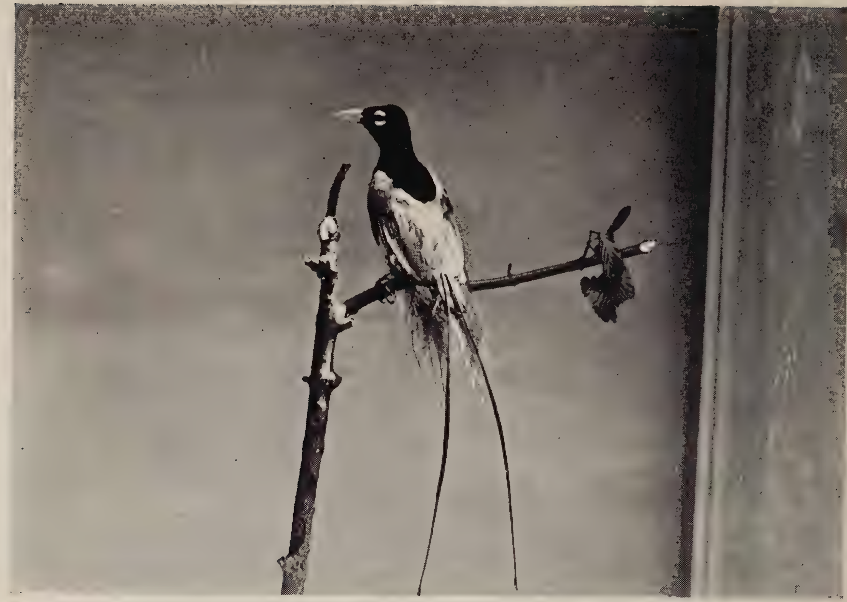
We had hardly finished with our dispensary work, when more birds began to come in. Six-plumes, magnificents, superbs, brightly colored lories, in quick succession. The



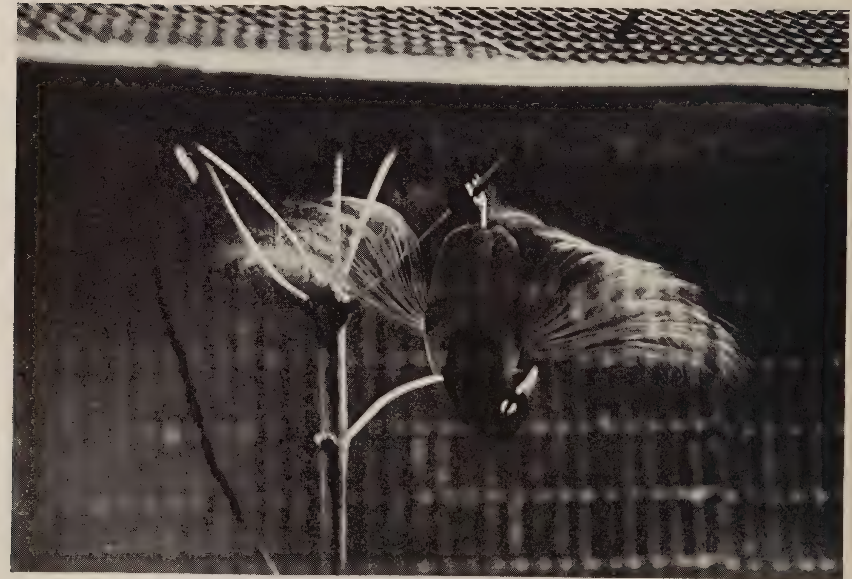
KUNI WOMEN.



KUNI WOMEN. THE DRAPERIES ARE CARRYING-NETS.



PRINCE RUDOLPH'S BLUE BIRD OF PARADISE, COLLECTED BY THE EXPEDITION.



PRINCE RUDOLPH'S BLUE BIRD OF PARADISE IN DISPLAY, REAR VIEW.
Photographs by E. R. Osterndorff. Courtesy New York Zoological Society.

last to come was the most gorgeous and most prized of all—a lovely cock Prince Rudolph's blue bird of paradise. This really was the bird we had come to get but somehow, in spite of Ward's confidence, I never had really thought we should. But here he was, more wonderful, more dazzling, than any of the few mounted or living birds I had seen before.

Adjectives and similes fail—I know I cannot adequately describe the beauty of this bird, for it is too much a matter of feeling. A text-book account of the body plumage sounds plain enough: head, back and breast, black; a short line above and below the eye, white; wings and tail, blue. But this is no ordinary black. It is black velvet of a rare and precious kind, with a glow of red showing on the crown, when light and position are exactly right. And the blue is no common blue. On the folded wings, particularly close to the black heart which is the back, there is a clear, translucent effect, as though one were looking deep below the surface. The two middle tail feathers are very long, like narrow black ribbons, with little blue tabs at their ends. From beneath the wings, at either side, spring delicate plumes of deep, rich blue, tipped with pale mauve.

It is only during the courtship display that the blue bird of paradise is seen at its best, for then its full beauty is disclosed. Grasping the perch firmly with his powerful feet, the bird turns over backward and hangs upside down. During the entire period of several minutes, the position of the feet is never changed and the strong grip is never relaxed. The plumes are spread wide, forming a broad fan, brilliant blue in the middle, delicate mauve at the sides. The short feathers of the abdomen now appear as an ovate patch of inky black, bordered above by a narrow band of deep red. Throughout, the body is jerked rapidly forward and back, from the hips, the vibration causing the dazzling shades of blue to run in waves of color over the filmy triangle of the plumes.

When this marvel has continued for as long, perhaps, as twenty minutes, the bird draws his body upward until it is almost horizontal and lashes his tail ribbons from side to side, so violently that one almost expects to hear them crack like coach whips. He then returns calmly to an upright position and the display is ended.

I had been excited enough about our first birds of paradise but I was tremendously stirred up by the arrival of our blue. Would he live? Could a creature of such delicate beauty be induced to accustom himself to the confines of a box and to eat such food as we could supply? His pale green beak looked strong enough, and I extended a tentative finger. Instantly, he seized it in a grip of steel and I was glad to get free. He could bite, anyway. We tried him next on a piece of banana. His reaction was instantaneous and identical, except that this time the powerful beak snipped off a bit of the soft fruit. He held it for an anxious instant, then swallowed it. While Ward held him in his hands, this bird, not two hours from the forest, ate the better part of a small banana. I then held up a pannikin of water and he drank his full. Once in his box, he shook his feathers, looked about and then hopped from perch to perch as contentedly as though he had been reared there.

It seemed a marvellous thing to me, yet they were nearly all like that. Even Count Raggi's birds of paradise, which are the shyest of the lot, ate and drank from our hands when we held them and immediately settled down quietly in their boxes.

It was evident, now, that we should have no difficulty in getting as many birds as we could care for. But the food problem was more pressing than ever and there was no relief in sight. We not only had ourselves and the boys to feed, but now we must have bananas and pawpaws for our birds. A little food was brought to us each day but not enough to satisfy our needs completely. The scattered Deva-deva people were doing the best they could but Iola, with its two large villages, had not been heard from. The policeman of that district had not yet returned from the dance, and without him we seemed unable to make contact with them.

That evening, two men came across from Iola to call on Koi. Somehow, perhaps during some previous expedition with which Koi had served, they had come to know him. Hearing from some of the Deva-deva people that he was with us, they had come at once to renew their acquaintance. The joy of the reunion was mutual and overflowing. They shook hands repeatedly, slapping each other on the back and calling each other's name over and over. Koi, as host, produced the one thing that could give his guests the most pleasure—a betel nut. He must have been very close to the end of the little stock he had brought with him from Mekeo, but if it had been his last, I am sure he would not have hesitated.

Wild betel grows in the mountains but the quality is far inferior to that of the cultivated nuts of Mekeo. Always, when we were in the mountains, the production of a betel nut by one of our boys was the signal for rejoicing on the part of local natives. In Mekeo, every one carries a lime-pot, made from a hollowed gourd. It contains a little powdered lime, laboriously burned in a crude kiln. A slender spatula, of bone or bamboo, is first moistened in the mouth, then inserted in the pot. The few grains of lime that adhere to it when it is withdrawn are scraped off by the teeth. A nibble of acrid betel nut is added and sometimes a piece of pepper root. The mixture of lime, betel and saliva produces the characteristic red fluid, which stains the teeth black and the lips red.

Mountain people, of course, are all possessed of lime pots but, except on social occasions, do not seem to carry them about as regularly as do the lowlanders. But Koi's friends had come prepared for a good time, and when the betel appeared both produced pots from their shoulder nets. The three sat in our veranda until well after dark, warming themselves at Koi's little cook fire and enjoying themselves hugely. When it was time to go, the visitors had Koi assure us that once they had informed Iola that we were friends, there would be no further difficulty about food. The Iola gardens were good and the Iola women strong. Also, some of the young men had returned from the Mafulu dance and many had not gone at all. They needed good knives and axes, there were many birds in the mountains of their hunting grounds and the whole village would turn out. And would the *taubadas* lend them the lantern, as the way to Iola was difficult, particularly in the darkness? No, the *taubadas* wouldn't. Oh, well, it didn't matter. They were mountaineers and not afraid of the dark, like Mekeo people. To-morrow they would send women with food and would get the boys afield. They went off into the pitchy blackness, with eight to ten miles of hard going before them. Now, perhaps, we should do without the Iola policeman.

CHAPTER VI

FRIENDLY CANNIBALS

WHILE we felt that the two visitors from Iola, because of their friendship with Koi, were sincere in their promises of food, we knew from unpleasant experience that we could not rely entirely upon them. We must do something for ourselves and this at once. After some discussion, we decided that I should take two boys and go on to Mafulu. During our several days of rest, I had fully recuperated and felt equal to anything.

None of us was quite certain as to just where Mafulu was, except that it was up the track. Some one had told us it was "four hours' march." We knew enough about New Guinea marching time to make sure another couple of hours would easily be added to the four. I did not like to leave Ward with the birds to look after and an excellent possibility of being starved out, but it seemed necessary to take the risk. We knew there was an outpost Mission at Mafulu and I might be able to get some rice. Also, if I could find a village, I might perhaps induce the people to bring us food, and possibly some birds. And there was the Iola policeman, who might be pried loose from the party and coaxed back to his village.

I could not take Koi, as Ward needed him as interpreter. However, we called him into consultation, explained the situation and asked his advice as to which boys to take. No matter how secret or how sudden our plans might be, Koi always seemed aware of them long before we supposed he did. This time he had the answer pat: Bioto and the Maino from Inawaibui were his instant choice. Without waiting for our approval, he left for the boys' house and was soon back with the information that the two would be ready to start in the morning. I liked Maino and was willing to trust him, but I was a little uneasy about the sullen and glowering man from Bioto. However, they did seem like the best team and I put aside my scruples.

Directly after breakfast next morning, my two beauties appeared. The rest of the boys turned out as well to witness our departure and I noticed that there was a good deal of talk going on amongst them. I soon learned the cause: now that the time had come, the two boys were not quite so keen. Mafulu is a dread name in Mekeo. The Mafulu people are only partly under control and they might very well forget themselves if a small party of strangers should appear. Moreover, neither of the boys could speak a word of Kuni, to say nothing of the strange language of Mafulu. I was, of course, equally ignorant and was further handicapped by the fact that neither Maino nor Bioto knew more than a word or two of English. We should have to rely on signs and my stumbling Motu for any exchange of ideas. No wonder they were loath to go! However, a promise of extra pay and plenty of food (which I hoped to get!) overcame their reluctance and at 8:30 we started.

It was a lovely, clear morning as we set out along the track toward the north. In addition to their knives and blankets, the boys carried only a camera each, with a piece of rubber "American cloth" thrown over one, in case of rain. I was burdened only with a khaki jacket, with some extra reels of film in the pockets. Lightly loaded, we made good time and after a half mile or so along the edge of the valley, took a sharp right turn to the east, straight down the side of the mountain. It was a long way, with much twisting about and hanging to roots and shrubs, but we finally reached the bottom. Here we found the Aya River rushing along at a great rate and apparently of some depth. Bioto crossed first, feeling his way, and making it safely. Maino tried next, but when he was in mid-stream, with swift water above his waist, he lost his balance and fell, letting go of the camera. It was instantly seized by the current and was flying down stream, when Maino leaped from a half-sitting position and caught it. I crossed as quickly as I could and opened the cover of the case with sinking heart. But Maino's action had been so swift that not a drop of water had penetrated to the camera.

The climb up the other side was one I shall not soon forget. We went up and up, in little zigzags—I counted nineteen elbow turns before I lost track. The boys' custom would not allow them to stop for breath and I was determined to do as well as they. Moreover, it was impossible for me to hold back, for my team had now adopted the rôle of guardians. One marched ahead, one behind. Nothing was said, but after one or two futile attempts to get out of line, I gave up and accepted the situation. Throughout the trip, they guarded me like two hens with but a single chick. I laid their solicitude to friendly interest and began to feel that my mistrust of Bioto was unwarranted. Indeed, it was, for he proved both honest and loyal, as did practically all of the boys on whom, at one time or another, I was forced to rely. Not until after our return to Deva-deva did I learn that Ward had promised them both a good hiding if any ill should befall me. Evidently they didn't intend to deserve the hiding.

The point where the track crosses the top of the ridge must be at least six thousand feet high. Once we had reached it, we began immediately to go sharply down again. The descent continued for some time, as we wound around the end of the mountain. The track was no more than a foothold, with a sheer, though heavily forested drop below. Here two rather curious things happened: from the almost perpendicular bank above, nearly level with the side of my face, a snake leaped straight out as I passed, just missed me, and hurtled into the bush below. The boy behind shouted *"Gai-gai!"*; the boy in front turned with ashen face—they *are* ashen sometimes, when they are frightened. Mekeo people are terribly afraid of snakes of all kinds, and do not seem to distinguish between poisonous and harmless species.

A little farther along, there was a crash just below us and I looked down in time to see a large cassowary forcing his way into a thick clump of bush. I could not determine the species but it was an adult, for it was coal black. What on earth a great, clumsy bird could be doing in such a place, or how he managed to keep his balance, I could not fathom. But one point was impressed upon me. The thick, heavy casque which the cassowary carries on its head is usually said to be a protection against thorns. I had always taken this as one of the conventional bits of natural history that writers are prone to repeat, one taking it from another. I owe them an apology for my thought, for many times, when struggling with catch-all "lawyer vines" and other devilish devices of the bush, I should have been very glad of a protective casque and a coat of thick, hairy feathers.

Well down the slope, the forest suddenly ended and we came out on a high projection, covered with sharp-edged saw-grass. The view here was almost equal to that at Dilava. Far below us, on our left, lay the deep valley of the Aduella River, known in Mafulu as the Auga. It ran straight away to the east, so that we could follow it for miles, until it was finally lost in a tangle of great, hazy mountains. The northern wall rose very sharply, so high that, from where we stood, we could not see beyond it. On the lower slopes were many garden patches, and still lower, as well as on the valley floor, were great open stretches of grass. I suppose, however, that this was largely saw-grass—if so, the most tangled bush would be more easily traversed, for this grass cuts like a knife.

Straight before us, on our side of the valley but slightly lower, stood the buildings of the Mission, sharply outlined on a jutting spur. We were well within Malfulu boundaries, and Maino and Bioto were already uneasy. After a short spell, we set out again at a good pace, through open country, and soon entered the Mission grounds. We had been just four hours doing what seemed to me about ten miles—for once the describers of distance had been exactly right!

Here I found Father Dontenwill, a kindly, black-bearded French Alsatian, who had spent twenty years of his life in this lonely spot. Speaking excellent English, he received me with friendly courtesy but, curiously, with no surprise. Rather hastily, I explained the purpose of my visit—I felt that a stranger here should give a straight account of himself. He took my explanation calmly—no doubt he had heard of mad naturalists before. They are likely to turn up, now and then, almost anywhere.

Before he would listen to any more of my tale, he insisted that I have luncheon with him. This, of course, I was glad to do but he said nothing about food for my boys. Before going in, I produced from the slack of my shirt two slightly worn ship's biscuits, one each for Maino and Bioto. This meant a feast to them, for *kiss-kiss* seldom comes their way.

In the rough, dimly lighted study-dining room, Father

Dontenwill did himself—and me—very well. There was stewed meat, fresh from a tin, with fried sweets, real white bread and tea. It was served by a string of young, well-trained native girls, from the Mission school, who entered in single file, each proudly bearing a dish. I was embarrassed by the excellence of the service but my appetite was not affected. During the course of the meal, the good Father informed me, regretfully, that he could spare me no rice. In fact, he seldom had any for his own use, the difficulties of transport making it necessary for the Mission to subsist chiefly on native food. This, at the moment, was at a low ebb and he would not be able to feed my boys.

This was a distinct set-back—two biscuits might do for lunch but something more substantial would have to be found for my two hearties that evening. I should have to scour about amongst the local natives and see what could be done. Close to the Mission, one at either side, were two groups of native houses. These looked fairly promising but Father Dontenwill informed me that both villages had been troublesome and their people had been persuaded to move away. The nearest community, called Taruve, was "one hour," or about four miles, farther up the track. Its people had just come to the end of a dance—in fact, the guests were lingering for the killing of the pigs.

Here, then, was the dance of which I had heard so much, and I was within four miles of it! True, I was exactly one day too late for the performance itself but there must still be something left to see. Anything would be better than a complete miss. I knew there would be plenty of food.

I explained to my host that neither I nor my boys could speak or understand the language of Mafulu. This, he said, need be no obstacle, for while he could not spare one of his older boys, he would send with us a lad who would make everything easy. I hunted out Maino and Bioto and explained to them, with some difficulty, my intention of going on to Taruve. Once the idea had penetrated, they were horror-stricken. For a small, unarmed party, consisting chiefly of Mekeo boys, to enter a Mafulu village, at any time, was an act of folly; to go there when a dance was under way was madness. The village would be filled with wild people from all over the surrounding hills, in no way bound by the policy of the local villagers, whatever that might prove to be. All of this I got by inference only, for their spoken rejoinder to my plan was a firm "*Lasi!*" No, they would not go.

I had the check for this move. I said "*Ani-ani lasi!*"—meaning "There is no food here." This thrust had a telling effect and they went immediately into conference. They evidently decided that they would rather risk their necks than go hungry, for they agreed to go. It was two o'clock by now and the sun was frequently obscured by passing clouds. It was time for the afternoon rain but I hoped we might complete our visit to Taruve before it set in. With each of the boys carrying a camera, I took my appointed place in the marching order, the rubber cloth folded over one arm. We were ready to start but there was no guide. Now there came shouts from a nearby building and a small native lad dashed excitedly out through one door and in again through another. Father Dontenwill appeared, saying that there was some little misunderstanding about the guide but that if we would start along the track, our escort would soon overtake us.

Only mildly disturbed, we proceeded. Still going slightly north of east, we wound in and out along the precipitous mountain-side, on what was hardly more than a pig track. At one point, we met a party of women, who promptly fled. Once or twice, as we looked back, we detected a small form, skulking well to the rear. Finally, just at the end of an hour of sharp walking, our guide overtook us. He pointed straight up the side of the mountain, indicating that the village was there. I looked more closely at the bank and saw signs of a path, indicated chiefly by slightly worn hand-holds on the tree-trunks, with here and there a broken branch. After a moment's hesitation, we started up, pulling ourselves along by whatever we could lay hand to. It was easier for the boys than for me, as their agile toes could get a hold where my hobnails slipped.

Suddenly, our way was blocked by high cross bars above us, and beyond them we could see the thatched roofs of houses. We evidently had arrived and I was glad that we had brought an interpreter. I turned to wave him forward to his duty but he was not there. Maino, pointing down the track, said, simply, "*Lao!*" Yes, true enough, our reluctant guide had deserted. Why Maino had failed to stop him I could not understand—perhaps he had hesitated to make a row in such a place.

Now we were in a pretty mess. Standing directly below the entrance to the village, we could not hope to escape detection for very long, if, indeed, we had not already been seen. It was impossible to go back and we hesitated about going ahead, for we should make a nice show, standing dumbly before a crowd of startled, dance-mad savages, with no word to tell why we had come. I could see that the boys favored instant flight, so, in order to avert what might have been a catastrophe, I determined on a bold front.

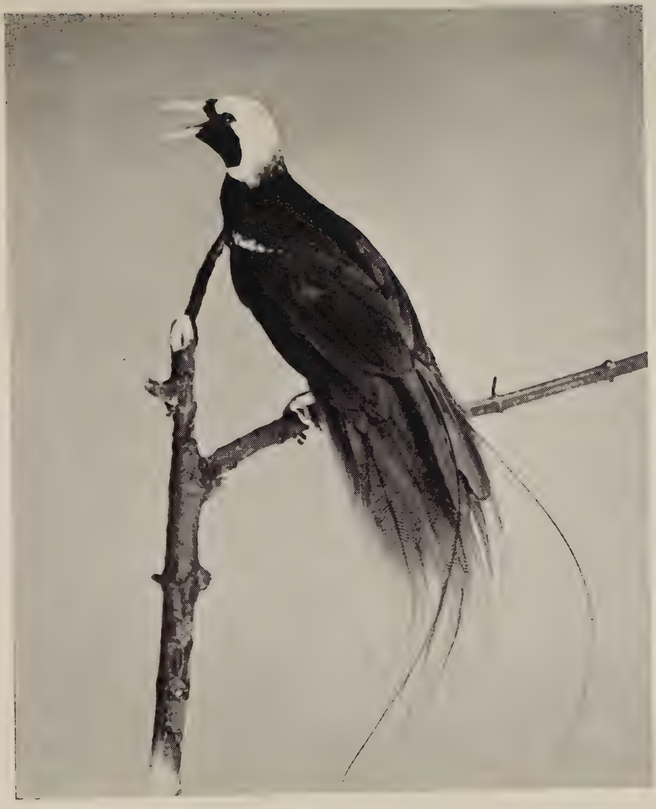
With inward quakings but as friendly an expression as I could command, I advanced to the tall, three-barred barrier, climbed over and dropped inside. I had entered a new world, weird and strange, complete within itself. About twenty tiny, thatched houses, not a third the size of those of Mekeo, were set, side by side, in a completely closed oval, all facing the centre. The fronts were covered with strips of bark, leaving small entrance holes, from which dark faces peered. A few people were in the bare space in the centre of the village, and at my appearance the women dove for the houses and the men faced about in startled consternation. Evidently, engrossed in their festivities, we had taken them completely by surprise.

I did not dare look behind me but felt, rather than heard, my two boys drop over the bars. Men were now pouring out of the houses and gathering in a semicircle, facing us. All were richly painted and many wore their decorations of feathers and shells. For a tense moment, we all stood, with no move on either side. Then a youth stepped forward a few paces and quietly addressed us in blessed Motu! Fortune had brought to the dance a guest who could replace the deserter.

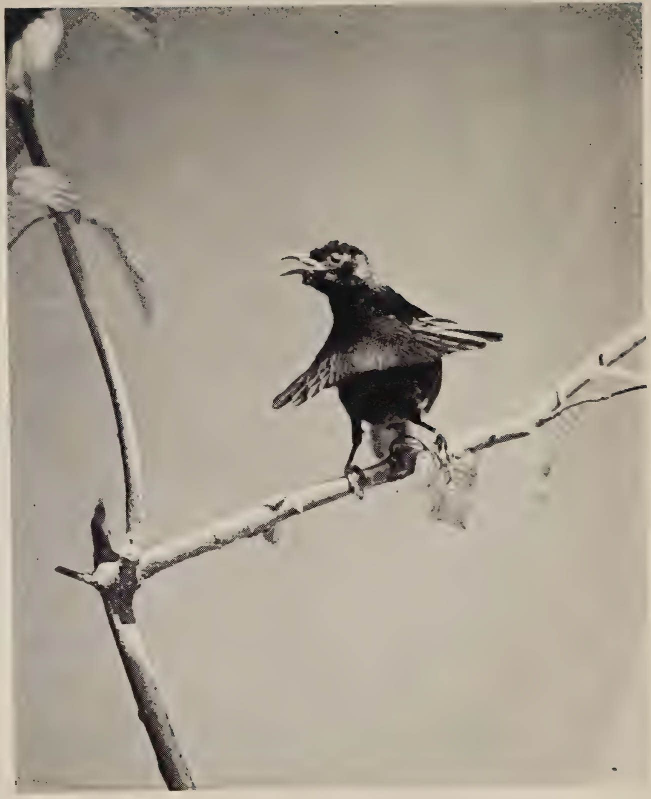
Eagerly, Maino and Bioto explained the purpose of our coming. In the jumble, I recognized the word *ani-ani*. We had come to get food. Our new friend turned to the crowd and talked long and rapidly. When he had finished, one or two old men came forward and shook hands, rather half-heartedly, and accepted small pieces of trade tobacco. I held out another piece as a friendly gesture but no one would come to take it. However, the ice was broken and I felt certain that in the end we should win their confidence completely.

Unlimbering a camera, I made a few exposures. A crowd of the more friendly men soon gathered, watching me with great interest and exclaiming, wisely, "Uh-uh" at each click of the shutter. They could not have had the slightest idea as to what it was all about but did not wish to appear ignorant. Now came a crucial test. Picking out the man who had been doing most of the exclaiming, I motioned for him to stand in a selected spot and pointed the camera at him. He got the idea immediately and stood as though frozen until I had finished. I was really amazed, for Mekeo people are very reluctant to be photographed, and I had expected certain refusal here. But these people, totally unfamiliar with such matters, seemed to have no superstitions about cameras. The more sophisticated coastal natives have added photographs to the list of personal things which they guard with the greatest care. For if an enemy can get hold of nail parings, strands of hair or anything else of the sort, he can turn them over to a *pouri-pouri* man, who then has complete power over the former owner, and can work against him an evil charm, from which there is no escape. I feel sure Mekeo people consider that a photograph lends itself admirably to such a purpose and that the holder can do the subject unlimited harm. They will not pose if they can avoid it.

Having rewarded the standee with a bit of tobacco, I was immediately besieged by a crowd eager to be paid for a simple matter of standing still for a few seconds. I recorded as many types as I could, though many I missed because I could not make the subject realize that he must not move. I felt, now, that we were on a completely friendly basis. I went about the village, examining the houses, and photographing everything of interest. Maino and Bioto were less seasily convinced than I, and stuck to me as closely as they could. At the end of the ring of houses, directly opposite the entrance, was a very large, two-storied affair, evidently newly erected. I knew this must be a guest house especially built for the occasion, as I could see that the upper compartment was

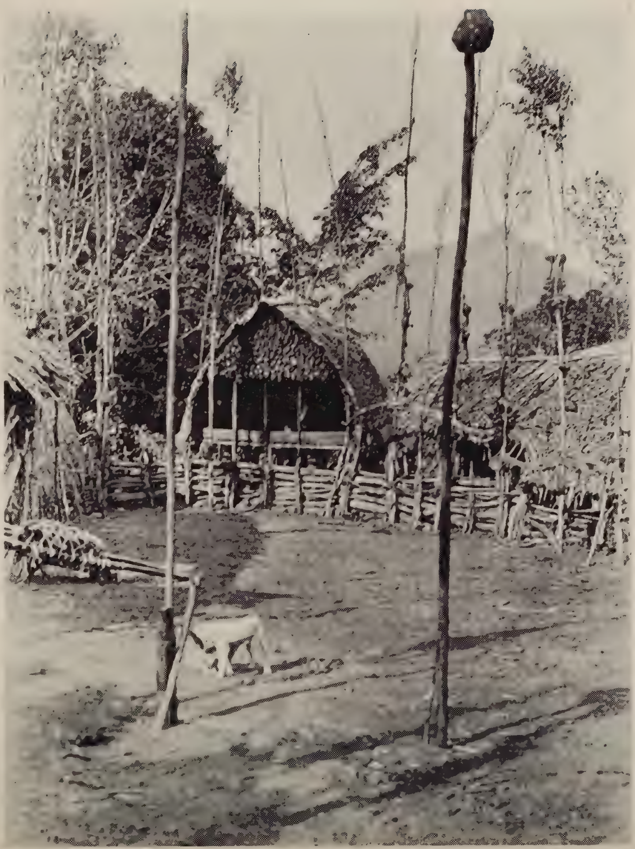


COUNT RAGGI'S BIRD OF PARADISE COLLECTED BY THE EXPEDITION.

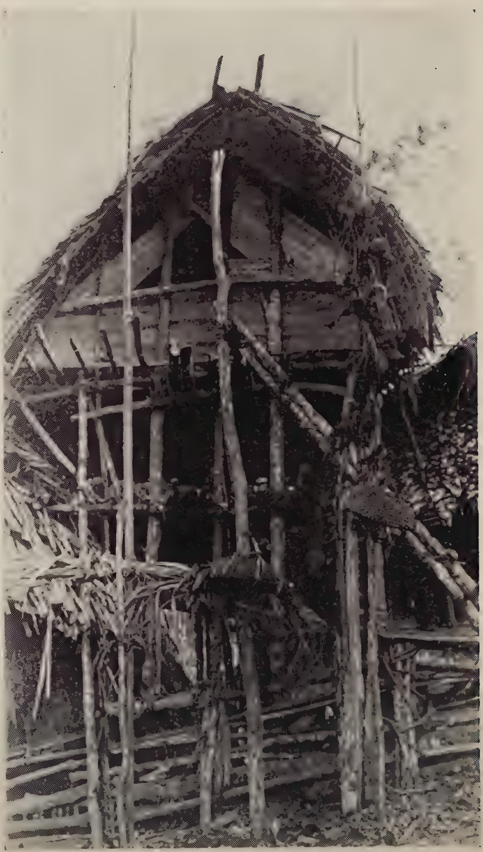


LESSER SUPERB BIRD OF PARADISE COLLECTED BY THE EXPEDITION.

Photographs by E. R. Osterndorff. Courtesy New York Zoological Society.



MAFULU VILLAGE OF TARUVE.



BOYS' HOUSE OR *DUBU* AT TARUVE.

jammed with people. As I approached, they began to withdraw, and when I came near, the peering faces completely disappeared. They must have been visitors from some far place, for, during my stay in the village, they never again showed themselves. The knowledge of their unfriendly presence made me a little uneasy. My two boys did not like it at all, and urged me away.

Suddenly, my attention was attracted by a commotion at the entrance of the village. A crowd of men entered, carrying two heavy, wriggling burdens, wrapped in strips of bark and lashed to long poles. I noticed the two Mekeo boys exchanging startled glances and quickly sensed the cause of their uneasiness. I watched with more than casual interest while the outer coverings were cut away and experienced a sharp feeling of relief when the objects proved to be two living pigs. Still suspended, wriggling, from their poles, they were hung in front of the principal *dubu,* which was at the centre of the western side of the village. Other creatures than pigs have hung before the *dubus,* waiting for a dance to end!

The men who brought the pigs evidently had been absent from the village when we arrived, for we had not seen them before. They were a surly, unfriendly crew and plainly resented our presence at this rite. This brought me back to the realization that, after all, we were in the village on sufferance only and that we had a long way to go before night. I motioned to the boys that we were about to depart, when one of them murmured "*Ani-ani.*" I had nearly forgotten the food which was part of our reason for coming. I called our volunteer interpreter and told him that we would exchange matches and tobacco for potatoes. He replied that there was plenty of food, pointing to rows of tall poles reaching high above the houses. They were hung lavishly with taro, jack-fruit (an overgrown relative of the bread-fruit), and smoked quarters of wild pig and wallaby, wrapped in coverings of bark.

The village women had remained very shy and I had seen hardly any except one or two old crones, past the age of caring. Now, at a word from the men, they poured forth in a horde, carrying nets of taro and sweet potatoes. We placed our rubber cloth on the ground and it was soon heaped with as much food as it would enfold—certainly over a bushel—which I paid for with a couple of sticks of tobacco and a few wax vestas. One of the boys took this load on his shoulders, the other stowed the two cameras. No complaints of over-loading now! The whole village, of course, was aware that we were about to depart and we were surrounded by a crowd of men and boys, with children and even a few women in the background. I took advantage of the opportunity to put forward a plea for birds, explaining that we were stopping at Deva-deva and would pay liberally, in knives and axes, for birds of paradise. When this offer had been translated for the benefit of the assembly, many of the men nodded with understanding and said they would try. Our interpreter multiplied this response to rosy promises—they would bring us many birds. But I knew nothing would come of it, for not a man would stir from the village until the pigs had been killed and apportioned, and every atom of other food had been eaten or divided amongst the guests. Moreover, I was sure no Mafulu man would invade the Kuni territory for any such purpose. As it was, the nearest I got to Mafulu birds of paradise was the information that Count Raggi's, which is *lokohu* in Motu and *yobu* in Kuni, is called *koga* in Mafulu.

Before we left, I broke up two or three sticks of tobacco and gave a piece to as many as I could of the men who pressed forward to shake hands in farewell. They escorted us to the bars and helped the boys over with the potatoes. As we scrambled down the mountain-side toward the track, we found numbers of men gathered in little groups of two or three, waiting to shake hands.

With the breath of relief I drew when we had reached the main track came a sense of pleasure at the outcome of our trip. These uncultured and untrammelled savages, shy, frightened and half belligerent at first, had proved to be as friendly and hospitable as one could hope, once their confidence had been won. The experience put me in complete sympathy with the Government's policy in dealing with out-lying natives: no officer is allowed to resort to force until every possible expedient has been tried in the effort to make friends. So faithfully is this rule adhered to that lives of police have sometimes been lost because of their reluctance to open fire. Whenever it is necessary to kill natives in self-defense, the attacked expedition invariably devotes its efforts to getting away with as little loss as possible. As soon as practicable, a return trip is made, in larger force, not for the purpose of seeking vengeance, but to attempt to pacify the hostile tribe by assurance of good intent. Seldom does the system fail.

The rain which had threatened all afternoon still held off and we made good time on the homeward track. My own feelings of pleasure were in no way reflected by the boys, who had no confidence in Mafulu and wanted no part of it. I had carelessly placed my hand against the dead trunk of a tree fern on the steep slope below the village and was anxious to stop for a minute to pick out the dozens of needles that had rewarded my heedlessness. But Maino and Bioto had their minds on other matters and would not let me pause.

We reached the Mission just in time for supper. The boys were assigned to a space under a building, left by the slope of a little knoll. Here they were quite content, and before I went in to supper had set some potatoes to boil in a borrowed kerosene tin.

I attacked the Mission's excellent fare with special gusto, for I was not only hungry but very well pleased with myself. I had walked a good eighteen miles without being unduly tired. I had visited a Mafulu village under the best possible conditions, without the dampening presence of police or missionary. The miracle of a rainless day had happened, and I had enjoyed a photographic spree. I knew we should get no birds of paradise, and no rice, but still I felt the trip had been a complete success.

After supper the hospitable Father Dontenwill, under the benign influence of a tin of Champion fine-cut and a package of Zig-zag cigarette papers, talked long of Mafulu and its people. The name itself is a corruption of Mambule or Mampule, a term used by natives in the general neighborhood of the Mission. The whole district is now commonly known as Mafulu. The name is also used, in a general way, for the Mission itself, although its proper name is Popole.

The Mafulu people themselves appear to represent purely Papuan stock, which has not been affected by the Melanesian influence, advancing from the coast. Rather strangely, they seem to average slightly taller than the intermediate Kuni people. In color, they are very dark, noticeably so in contrast to the *café au lait* most common in Mekeo. Their language belongs to one of the Papuan groups, with only an odd word or two, probably recently introduced, of Melanesian origin. As in the Kuni district, both men and women wear only the simple perineal band, which, in the gentler sex, amounts to no more than a string.

The Mafulu people are unquestionably cannibals and probably always have been. The influence of the Mission and the probability of an eventual visit by the police have somewhat dulled the pleasure of this custom, for news travels far in New Guinea and word of any illicit celebration is likely to leak out. Enemies killed in battle are the usual victims of these feasts. But even warfare is frowned on by the "govamen," and the old habits will eventually be completely suppressed.

Mafulu is bounded on the west by the Kuni district. To the south and east, where it merges with the territories of related peoples, the boundaries are not definitely established. But to the north, the limit is fairly obvious, for it lies somewhere in the valley of the Auga, or in the foothills on the farther side. Here lies the Ambo country, inhabited by fierce and warlike people who, even to this day, have never been brought under the influence of Government or Mission. Only a few years ago, they sent out word that if a patrol party came, they would attack it. In the face of this dare, a small expedition was sent, and found the Ambos as good as their word. After a pitched battle, in which both sides suffered losses, the patrol managed to extricate itself. As far as I know, the usual conciliatory party has never made its visit.

Father Dontenwill said that twenty years before, when he had first arrived at Popole, he had felt it his duty to cross the Auga and attempt to make friends with the people, though even the Mafulu natives held them in awe. The full details of this trip my host did not reveal but he summed up by saying that the Ambos were "not nice," that he had never gone back, and that he had no intention of doing so.

Bed-time comes early in New Guinea. Just as I was about to say good-night, the little troop of girls who had waited on the table approached. They stood shyly just within the circle of light from the veranda lantern, until Father Dontenwill invited them in. They all wore Mother Hubbards, a costume prescribed by the Mission for all native girls in its care. In spite of the inherent ugliness of their dresses, several of the party were quite pretty, and all were graceful and well mannered. They had brought along a little basket containing dried nuts of the mountain Pandanus, which is more or less cultivated by the Mafulu people. These the good Father was evidently requested to open. The nuts were heavily covered with husks and I soon saw why their opening was a special favor. For it was only when they were laid on a flat piece of iron and stoutly belabored with a heavy hammer that the kernels were finally extracted. They were sweet and oily, very much like Brazil nuts.

As the opening of the nuts progressed, the girls gradually lost their shyness of me and soon forgot me altogether. They laughed and chatted in the Mafulu language with Father Dontenwill, as each awaited her turn to receive a tidbit. In the lowland Missions, which receive a Government grant toward native education, only English is spoken to the children. But in Mafulu there is no such restriction and the native language is in common use.

Not wishing to interrupt the happy gathering, I finally backed out of the light to go to my room. But before I left, I stopped to look again. The bearded Father, his pale face smiling, was bent over his improvised anvil. Surrounding him were the eager girls, laughing but restrained. I knew they were all orphans, gathered from nearby villages into the shelter of the Mission, to save them from starvation and neglect. We may think what we like about Missions in general. Each is entitled to his own opinion as to the ethics of imposing Christianity upon savage races. But to me, that group in the circle of the lantern was symbolic of a function which finds the mission at its best, a tremendous force for good. Eventually, most of these girls would return to their villages, marry and no doubt revert to native customs, which is as it should be. But that reversion could never be complete, for the influence of the devoted man who had raised them, for a moment, from savagery, could never be entirely forgotten.

As I moved along the narrow gallery toward the cubicle to which I had been assigned I heard a sound. I looked and there, just visible in the darkness, I made out the features of Maino peering over the rail. "*Taubada namo?*" Yes, I was well. "Boy *namo?*" "*Namo.*" That was all—the face disappeared. Stuffed to bursting with the potatoes of Mafulu, Maino and Bioto should, traditionally, have gone immediately to sleep. But Maino, at least, would not rest until he had made sure that I was quite safe in the hands of the missionary. He had hung about until he had the opportunity to speak to me.

As I stretched luxuriously on the hard little pallet that seemed like a bed of down after the rest-house poles, I tried hard to feel sorry for Ward, doing his best on the thin fare of Deva-deva. But I could not restrain a smile of satisfaction as I fell asleep. After all, it was only one night and to-morrow we could all starve together.

The whole Mission was astir at dawn and I decided to make a panorama of the Auga Valley, in the clear morning light. The only spot that offered an unobstructed view was the roof of a small outhouse, a rickety structure that partly overhung the brink of the precipice, and was supported from below by poles set at crazy angles. It had been built for other purposes than to be stood upon, and the weight of the clumsy, hard-wood ladder produced by the Mission boys threatened to push it over altogether.

When I had finally gained this precarious vantage point and had got my camera set up, I paused to look about. I seemed to teeter on the very edge of the world. Far away, at my right, the sun was just appearing over the eastern mountains, throwing them into deep shadow, but striking down the full length of the valley below me. To the north, tremendous ranges rose, one behind another, until I finally lost them in the mists. In the nearer foreground was the country of the truculent Ambos, efficient barrier to whatever lay beyond. A slender shaft of smoke, from the very tip of a peak across the valley, rose straight into still air. I wondered if there was "long pig" for breakfast in an Ambo village, and thought of an incident told me by Ward.

He had been working in the vicinity of Virjus Dome, with the Boboi people, western neighbors of Ambo. A small fair had been arranged and here Ward met a party of Ambo traders. They were well aware of Ward's purpose and greeted him eagerly. If he would honor their village with a visit, they would catch him more birds than he could take away. They would even kill a pig. Ward had been searching, without success, for the blue bird of paradise, and in spite of some misgivings was half minded to accept the Ambo invitation. As he wavered, one of his own boys called him aside. "You no go, *taubada*. You go, *you* be pig!" This well-put advice was so much in keeping with Ward's better judgment that he decided there probably were no blue birds in the Ambo mountains.

As I looked down the valley toward the west, I realized that I was actually standing on one side of the Gap, which I had seen in the dim distance, from the deck of the *Morinda*, anchored in Hall Sound. As I had looked then, the faint notch had seemed so far away and unattainable that it had never even occurred to me that I should ever reach it. Yet here I was, perched on a Mission outhouse, hanging over its very brim!

Impressed as I was with the grandeur of the view, I was not so completely overcome as to forget to keep my shaky balance. Having exposed my film, I gingerly manœuvred myself and the camera to the top of the ladder. I then managed to ease myself down it, encouraged by a troop of small boys, who had gathered in the hope of a bit of sport.

Breakfast was at seven, and with my mind on Devadeva, I fear I did myself extra well. As we were about to depart, the hospitable Father again expressed his regret that he could spare me no rice. He insisted that I should take part of a large loaf of bread, and I eagerly accepted. It would ease my conscience to present it to Ward and would also give him an idea of the hardships I had endured in Mafulu!

It is the worst of bad form to thrust oneself upon an outpost Mission as I had been compelled to do. It had many mouths of its own to feed. And now I was deeply embarrassed, for I knew Father Dontenwill would not let me off by accepting payment. Money will not buy food in the mountains and no Mission will accept it. But I knew a trick. Would he, perhaps, take something for the children under his care? I had taken advantage of his one weakness—he wavered, finally yielded. But even this did not entirely relieve my feeling of guilt. Could I send him something from Port Moresby, granted I finally got there again? His kindly face lighted. Europeans were very fond of wine. Grapes did not thrive at Mafulu. He had tried. The red wines were the best . . . if I really wanted to be so kind. I promised gladly. Nothing could be too good. Weeks later, I gave myselef the pleasure of making up a package of Port Moresby's choicest wine, and sending it on, via the Mission on Yule Island. I can only hope it eventually found its way to Mafulu.

As we were about to start for Deva-deva, it occurred to me that it might be an excellent idea to carry along the remains of the bushel of Taruve potatoes. I had some difficulty in getting my thought home to Bioto and Maino but they finally grasped the point, and assumed an injured air. "*Kaima lasi!*" No potatoes! I should have known—of course there were no potatoes. No New Guinea boy would let up as long as a particle of food remained uneaten, provided it was his to eat. The blighters had cleared the lot. I couldn't really blame them. After all, that was what they had come for. And I hadn't done so badly myself. No doubt we should more than make up for it after we had rejoined Ward.

This was the second of three miraculous days without rain. The track was quite dry, the footing was good, and we made excellent time. We went straight down to the Aya River without a stop, the boys pushing me hard. But I was almost as good as they, now, and felt I could stick it if they could. After we had rested ten or fifteen minutes, I suggested that we go on. I was surprised to find they were unwilling to do so, Bioto holding up a foot and saying it was *dika*. It did look a bit crocked and I knew he had complained of it during the march up into the mountains. But it had seemed right enough before we got to the river. Now they said I was to go on by myself, and they would come along later. I made them carry me across the river, anyway, where they immediately sat down, Bioto nursing his *dika* foot. I knew well enough what the real trouble was—a handful of potatoes had escaped the slaughter and they meant to finish them without having to divide with the boys at the camp.

The climb up the mountain on the Deva-deva side is not nearly so trying as the one that leads to Mafulu, and I was soon at the top. The Aya Valley looked very good to me—I could see straight away to Iola and could make out our camp on its jutting spur. As I stood for a moment, a pair of huge black vulture-headed parrots flew over, so close that I could plainly see not only the blazing scarlet of their wings but their ugly, featherless heads. This curious parrot has a wide distribution in New Guinea but this was the only occasion on which I saw it.

Although I had left Ward only the day before, I felt a real thrill of home-coming when a bend in a horseshoe curve brought me close enough to *coo-ee!* across to him, and to hear his answering call. When I reached the camp, I found him well enough, except that he had been stung by a scorpion the day before, and had had a bad night in consequence. His hand was still swollen but he would not let me put anything on it.

My misgivings concerning Ward's food supply proved to be unfounded, for Koi's Iola friends had kept their promise. True to their word, they had sent women down from the village with a good supply of potatoes, pumpkins, and a few bananas. There were also a few pawpaws but they were nothing to the Mekeo ones and seemed never to ripen properly. Ward had also received more birds, so many, in fact, that he had been refusing the more common species and had told every one he would take nothing now but blues and Count Raggi's.

Soon after my arrival, a boy came bringing a splendid cock blue. Directly behind him came a breathless lad of twelve or fourteen, who said that he had come down from the high mountains beyond Iola. He had gone there with his father to catch birds, along with others from the village. Ward's demand for blues had had its effect on the

Iola men, who seemed to have turned out in a body. Koi's translation of the lad's explanation was "All boy he go bush!" The youthful messenger had been sent to bring us a basket containing a large, brownish bird, which proved to be a long-tailed bird of paradise. We took it to be a female, for it was dark brown above, and closely banded in dark and light brown below. This was a stroke of luck we had not expected, for the long-tail is a rare and striking species. The boy said it was called *erma.* We astounded the lad by giving him a huge trade knife, to be taken to his father, with the message that for a male *erma* a steel ax awaited.

We were now getting a bit pressed for cages and called for volunteers to make temporary ones from reeds, at a shilling each. Only Maino and young Okoa were willing to offer their services but we found them quite sufficient. Having first cut a supply of green reeds from the mountain-side, and stripped off a large quanity of bark for rope, they were not long in tying together as many cages as we required. The only difficulty was that a day or two later the reeds had shrunk to such a degree that the bindings no longer held them and an emergency repair job had to be done.

On the evening after my return from Mafulu, we were favored by a visit from the Iola policeman, whom I had begun to look upon as a phantom. I had failed to find him at Mafulu and had not met him on the track. He explained this by saying that he had come home straightaway over the mountains, on a track of his own. He was very friendly, accepted our tobacco freely and promised that his people should make up for their early lack of hospitality. He had brought along his lime pot, just in case he might have need for it. The spatula was very interesting, made from bone which Koi said came from a *koko-koko* (cassowary). It had a rough ring at the top, to which were attached the golden scalps of two gardener bower-birds, called *gullawalla*. I wanted it very much and offered its owner, in exchange, a brass-bound knife. He was willing to give me the pot but not the bone. Next, he would let me have the pot and the bone, if I would allow him to remove the scalps. But I wanted the lot and finally got them, the policeman going off to Iola, trying the edge of his new knife with his thumb, as he went up the track.

The next day was the third and last of the rainless period. Another blue came down from Iola, with word that every one was trying hard. We also received three beautiful horned manucodes and a blue one, almost inextricably tangled up together in a small basket. We finally got them unwound from each other and into boxes. The single bird was somewhat similar to the Yule Island species, being black with a high bluish iridescence. The others were far handsomer, their plumage scintillating with rich purples and greens, even to the pointed head tufts that give them their name. The eyes of all the manucodes are perhaps their most striking feature, for they are a blazing, ruby red. Ward looked on these manucodes with much disfavor, calling them "blasted crows" and even worse, but to me they were birds of paradise and I insisted on keeping them.

The high spot of the day came with the arrival of a boy carrying, in separate baskets, a male and a female of Count Raggi's bird of paradise. This bird, as I have already said, is abundant from the lowest foothills right up to a considerable elevation. All day long, at Deva-deva, we could hear them calling, but up to now, in spite of constant urging, we had never been able to get them. The male was fully adult and his crimson flank plumes were the longest and heaviest I had ever seen.

These two birds were much shyer than any of the other birds of paradise we had collected, yet both fed and drank freely while we held them. We tried, at first, to keep them together in one box, but almost immediately the female attacked the male so fiercely that we had to separate them.

CHAPTER VII

IN THE MOUNTAINS

THE difficulty we had experienced in securing a species as abundant as Count Raggi's bird of paradise was hard to understand. Six-plumes, magnificents, superbs, had been brought to us in some numbers. We had several blues and even a long-tail, which we had never hoped to get. When we tried to impress the Deva-deva and Iola natives with our wish for Count Raggi's, they always said they would bring them. But until to-day they hadn't.

Once our two prizes had been settled in their individual compartments, and we had made certain that they had found both food and water, we called Koi into action and had him quiz the man who had brought them. Why were they so difficult to get? Koi knew the answer without asking—no doubt he had heard it many times while listening to discussions among our visitors. It never would occur to him to tell us, unless we put it to him directly. He said, simply, "Him no dancey!" This terse statement was a complete explanation of the conditions but we wanted more facts, and urged Koi to ask the man to elaborate. The exposition was long, varied and entirely unintelligible, as far as we were concerned, and Koi was appalled at the mental effort necessary to translate it for us. However, persistent badgering finally brought forth from our interpreter much information. This, added to what I already knew or later learned, gave me what I believe to be the principal facts. A complete understanding of Koi's "Him no dancey" involves much of one phase of native life, as well as the habits of the birds of paradise.

The Kuni and Mekeo natives, and some of their neighbors, have developed a technique of bird-catching that I have never seen approached by any other primitive people. It is possible that their ability may be equalled by other New Guinea tribes with which I am not acquainted, but certainly not by all. For I believe this refinement of skill is related to the fact that the natives of these sections are spear people—that is, the spear is their principal weapon. In both districts, men and boys may be met going about in the bush, carrying bows and arrows. But these arms do not really belong to either the Kuni or the Mekeo cultures, having been borrowed from neighboring tribes. The hunters have no great faith in these weapons and no real skill in their use. They require certain birds for food and birds of paradise for their plumage. The red plumes of Count Raggi's are the principal trade medium of the mountain people and are passed in exchange to tribes and villages that otherwise could not get them. They cannot kill the birds with spears and cannot rely on getting them with their imported arrows. Hence they have had to fall back upon their nets and snares. I never saw any sort of bird lime used.

While this skill, in the eyes of a white man, seems uncanny, it is, after all, only a natural extension of a knowledge of birds and beasts that is an essential part of the native's life. To sound and smell, he is as keen and sensitive as a hunting animal. Nothing escapes his notice. Within his own territory, the man knows where each bird has its home: where it feeds, where it displays, where it sleeps. His life and the lives of his family depend upon this familiarity with the habits of the creatures about him. He is as much a part of the jungle as they are.

As nearly as I can tell, the nesting season for birds of paradise, in the Kuni district, appears to be in April, May, and June. It is well known that the adult males of Count Raggi's bird of paradise and its relatives gather in selected trees, during the mating period, to perform their wonderful courtship dances. The location of these trees is common knowledge to the local native. He knows quite well that, at the proper time, he can set his string snare on a certain branch and that if he remains long enough, hidden in the bush below, holding the free end of his string, a sharp jerk will eventually catch a dancing bird.

Prince Rudolph's blue, like Count Raggi's, is caught at its dancing places in the trees. The six-plumed, the magnificent and the lesser superb all dance on or near the ground, and are easily taken there in snares or in nets woven of bark rope. The natives know the location of these dancing spots, as well as the birds that use them. Catching, at this season, is hardly more than a matter of routine.

But the time of our visit was late October and "Him no dancey." Nesting over with, and the molting period at hand, both young and old birds were wandering at random through the bush, searching for edible fruit and taking it as they found it. Catching had now become an uncertain game, for the birds could be located only by searching out likely spots for food. There probably are many sources of supply, but at this season there seem to be two principal ones.

The first of these is a small fig, red when ripe, and of the taste and consistency of a bit of cotton-wool. It grows on a tree of considerable size and the fruit is profuse. In Deva-deva it is known as *fia*. Koi called it *mino* and said it is found also in Mekeo. Later on, I did see there a fig that seemed to be the same but it is quite likely that it would be botanically distinct.

More important is the fruit of a tree which Doctor E.

D. Merrill, Director of the New York Botanical Garden, has identified, from photographs, as a species of Pandanus. Kuni people call it *paia.* The slender trunk rises to a height of from fifteen to twenty feet, and is topped by a cluster of long, narrow, pointed leaves. The fruit of this tree is much like a huge ear of corn, may be as much as two feet long, and is covered with a fibrous sheath. When this is removed, the fruit is found to consist of a dense core, thickly set with slender, reddish seeds, about three-quarters of an inch long. These seeds are covered with a thin layer of sweetish pulp, over a comparatively large pit. This fruit is a favorite food of the birds of paradise; our own birds ate it greedily, disgorging the pits.

The *paia* was now ripening well. The hunters had only to watch the fruits they had already spotted, until they reached the proper stage, when they knew they would be visited by the birds they sought. They could then set their nets or snares and be almost certain of success. Our voluble informant assured Koi that blues, magnificents, superbs and six-plumes were caught in this way. But Count Raggi's, so easily taken in their dancing trees, were difficult to capture on the feeding grounds. The pair he had brought he had secured only by chance.

We now understood not only why we had failed to get more of this species, but also why so many females of others had been brought. Birds caught in the dancing season are almost always males, with females at a premium. Now, old and young, of both sexes, were caught with equal success.

It was evident that not only were we very fortunate to have secured the pair of Count Raggi's but that we were unlikely to get more. We now had seven blues and as many of the others as we could handle. We could do no good by staying longer and were anxious to start on the long march back. But we could not go without food and for that were dependent on the slim chance that our relief expedition would return successful. We settled down to long days of waiting and looking after our birds, which required constant attention.

We had, by now, completely won the confidence of both Deva-deva and Iola people, and during daylight hours were never without visitors. Most of the younger men were absent in the bush, trying to secure the few species of birds of paradise we would still accept. But the small boys were always with us, trying to cadge bits of tobacco, or catching grasshoppers for our birds. These insects abounded in the grass of the spur but were exceedingly difficult to catch in any numbers. The children had no difficulty in getting them, however, and would bring us long strings, threaded on stalks of dried grass. Some of the grasshoppers were of large size and the youngsters made a sport of shooting them with toy prong-tipped arrows. A string of succulent insects, bought for an inch of trade tobacco, was priceless as an aid in feeding the delicate birds we were trying so hard to preserve.

Often, the old men, usually in couples, would come and squat before us, a bamboo pipe held conspicuously on the knees of one. I cannot remember that they ever asked for *kuku,* after the fashion of Mekeo, but somehow the pipe was never cold for long. Their method of smoking is practised, I believe, throughout most of New Guinea. The pipe, known in Motu as *baubau,* is made from a section of bamboo, from a foot to two feet in length. It is cut to include two of the "joints" or sections which entirely close the cavity of the stem at intervals. A small hole is made in one of these thin partitions through which to draw. A second hole is made in the side of the pipe, near the opposite end. Finely shredded tobacco is rolled up in a bit of green leaf (Mekeo prefers newspaper) and inserted in this second hole. The mouth of the smoker is now applied to the drawing end and a glowing ember touched to the cigarette. In this way, the cavity of the pipe is filled with smoke. It is never drawn into the mouth at this time. Now the cigarette is removed and through the hole in which it had been inserted the smoker draws the smoke deep into his lungs. Two such efforts will usually exhaust the contents. Etiquette now demands that he refill the pipe with smoke before handing it to his companion. Rarely, I have seen Kuni men smoke leaf-wrapped cigarettes, white-man fashion. This practice is common in Mekeo—our own boys were constantly whining for bits of newspaper. Thin Zig-zag papers, which I used myself, they would not have.

The women of Iola came down almost daily, usually in parties of seven or eight, to bring us food, in exchange for salt, tobacco and bits of cloth. It was a long trip from their village and usually, after the matter of payment had been adjusted, they would seat themselves in the grass for a smoke before leaving. Impossible that Mekeo women should do such a thing; they are genuinely frightened of white men and will spare no pains to avoid them. But the Kuni women, while shy, were not really afraid. Once they had learned there was nothing to fear from Ward or myself, their assurance was complete. Of the Mekeo boys they took no notice, and indeed there was no need, for our retainers were too well aware that they were in a strange country to attempt any advances. In fact, so anxious were they to abide by the native custom in regard to women, that they would not come near our feminine visitors, much less address them.

These women, of course, were clothed only in the very narrow gee-string customary among the mountain people.

Yet, like all of the uncivilized natives with whom I came in contact, they were completely modest. During all my stay, I never saw an offensive act or gesture, or deliberate exposure, by either sex. In their scanty bands, they consider themselves properly clothed. Man or woman would as soon remove them in public as a citizen of New York, in his right mind, would walk naked up Fifth Avenue.

I had so far found it impossible to secure photographs of mountain women. I was now accepted by local society and thought I ought to be accorded some privileges. Two or three of the women wore unusual ornaments suspended from the lobe of the ear. One favored a brassy safety pin, which must have had a curious history; another the mummified body of a tiny red lorikeet, smaller than a sparrow. Negotiations for the purchase of some potatoes and a few bananas had been completed and the women were stowing their plunder and preparing for the usual smoke and gossip. I told Koi I would like to make some photographs of them. My translated request was met with firm refusal. They could stand being looked at, even talked to a little, but that was their limit. Argument failed to budge them. I offered the more than liberal price of a stick of tobacco each. They wavered but would not yield. After quite half an hour of this, I finally lost both patience and temper, and angrily shouted at Koi to tell them what I thought of them and exactly where they could go. They could not understand my words but the general idea was obvious. Immediately the two women with the decorations, and a wrinkled old hag, stood up, grinning. When I pointed out where they were to stand, they did so.

As I fiddled about for the proper focus and exposure, I gradually became aware of why these particular three had given in. The old woman was indifferent—she wanted the tobacco but would not rise alone. The young woman with the safety pin was quite handsome and her short hair was thickly covered with perforated dogs' teeth, an indication of wealth and position. The one with the little bird was a huge creature, a real giantess. The Kuni people seemed to me even shorter than those of Mafulu, the men not averaging much over five feet, the women even less. But this one towered above them all and must have been quite five feet and eight or nine inches. Her deportment was that of a person of distinction and I do not doubt she was. Once on their feet, these two young women became completely feminine. Proud of their rank, their good looks and their ornaments, they had got up through vanity. I could not get them to turn toward the camera their undecorated ears; I could photograph the lorikeet and the safety pin as much as I liked. When I had finished, and whole sticks of tobacco were being stowed in shoulder nets, there were looks of envy from the others. But they did not stir from the ground. No doubt they regretted not having brought along their dried birds and safety pins!

Each time the visitors from Iola returned to their village, we sent word to the policeman that we were anxious to secure the services of some of his constituents as carriers for the trip to Mekeo. Would he kindly come down and discuss it? Each day, we received a message that he would come at once, though these verbal despatches were always evasive on the subject of carriers. The Deva-deva policeman was of a different calibre. He was in constant attendance, squatting on his haunches, smoking our tobacco. He would get us plenty of carriers.

This man was the holder of a shooting license, unusual in the mountains. He also owned three 12-gauge shotgun shells, loaded with buckshot. But he had no gun. Each morning, at dawn, he would come to borrow ours, for the purpose of shooting the wild pigs that were ravaging his garden down near the river. Each morning, very soon after his departure, he would return, minus pigs and also out of tobacco. This lack of success finally became funny, and he had to endure a good deal of leg pulling each time he asked for the gun.

One day he failed to return at the usual time and just as we were beginning to wonder what was up, a small boy, bursting with excitement, came dashing into our camp. The policeman had wounded a pig, which had escaped into the bush. He had expended his three cartridges and as it was a large animal, he did not dare pursue it until his supply had been replenished. Skeptically, we gave the lad three more and he tore off to the scene of action. We had come to know the policeman quite well and felt it more than likely that his stock of cartridges was being increased at our expense. But the boys were confident and joyful, and began to gather huge heaps of firewood, in anticipation of a feast.

We heard no more of it until evening, when the small messenger returned, triumphantly bearing a tiny brown-and-black-striped piglet. It was about as small as a pig could be and still be a pig—I doubt if it weighed more than two or three pounds. The huntsman had sent it with his compliments; he would have brought it himself but was busy in pursuit of the mother, which had gone far into the bush. Winks were exchanged between Ward and myself but the boys' delight was complete. They seized upon it with shouts of glee, and as they were about to bear it away to their quarters, I told Koi to save me a bit, so that I could say I had eaten wild pig.

Songs and laughter echoed from the boys' house until long after we had finished our own frugal meal. Just as we were thinking of turning in, Master Koi appeared; I could see the dim forms of the other boys in the shadows behind him. He came into the veranda but said nothing, holding his hands behind his back. I asked him how the pig was. He said it had been delicious, so much so, in fact, that in enjoying it, they had quite forgotten to save me a bit. I had forgotten it myself, for that matter, for my request had been more or less a matter of form and I had never expected to taste the pig. But now, in the face of this dereliction, I began to feel I had been badly treated, and launched a description of the complete ingratitude of New Guinea people in general and Mekeo boys in particular. I warmed to my subject and was well under way when Koi felt the joke had gone far enough and produced, from behind his back, a badly burnt, almost invisible, hind quarter of the pig. There were screams of joy from the boys, whom I could see hanging onto each other to keep from falling to the ground. Koi's one good eye was popping; his ample mouth was spread from ear to ear. Their well-planned hoax had come off to perfection. But to me it was not so funny. Pig meant a great deal to these boys and there had been so pitifully little of it. I felt an ingrate to have asked it. I accepted the proffered gift but my appetite had gone. I took a nibble—I have tasted wild pig!—and gave it back. Koi hesitated—"You no like him, *taubada?*" Yes, I liked him all right but I wasn't hungry. It was a windfall for Koi.

It was noon the next day before the policeman returned with our gun. He had a long face and a sad tale, which somehow lacked the ring of truth. He had trailed the wounded pig until he lost the track in the darkness. He was then so far from home that he had had to camp in the bush and had only just returned, completely exhausted. But we noticed a strange protrusion of his abdomen and there was the glint of grease on his jowls.

He made no offer to return our shells, and since we should soon need his good offices in rounding up carriers, we thought it best not to ask for them. There was more to the pig story than he cared to tell. Village policemen are all more or less alike.

As Ward and I were expressing to each other our private opinions of this matter, loud shouts came from the track to the south. Through the gaps in the bush, we could see a troop of boys coming along, waving their arms. Our own retainers came rushing out and we all stood gaping as the procession came to the top of the spur and started down it toward our camp. We could hardly believe our eyes—the relief party had actually returned. It is not good to make a show of emotion—except rage!—before natives, but this time we were too delighted to restrain ourselves. We shook hands with each one and slapped them on the back. We examined the rice—two eighty-pound mats, with about ten pounds gone from one. They had actually brought it and eaten only ten pounds on the way. Not only that but they had recruited four new boys to help us down, had brought two small bunches of bananas, which they knew we badly needed as *manu ani-ani* (bird food), and had made the round trip in only eight days. They were frankly proud of themselves and we made no secret of our pride in them. The Wise Boy stood exonerated of any suspicion—he was exactly what he seemed. New Guinea boys were the best and the most faithful in the world!

It was a great moment for Ward and myself. With one hundred fifty pounds of rice, we should be able to get back to Mekeo with our lovely collection. We stirred up the now somnolent policeman, who was dozing over his pipe. He was to spread word among the local people that we were leaving on the morrow and wanted carriers. He responded by despatching one or two small boys with the message and shouted his familiar "*Bullamow*" up to Iola. As before, there was no response.

That evening, there were no visitors from Iola but we laid that to threatening rain. We went happily ahead with our preparations for an early departure in the morning. When it came, we stirred the boys out, ready for a start. Including Koi, we now had seventeen carriers and needed thirty. The policeman had promised the extra thirteen, but when it was time to go, only four appeared. No use. We should have to wait another day.

Next morning, nine local boys reported, but we were still short four and to make a start would mean leaving too much behind. We were now getting desperate. The few vegetables Deva-deva could supply were not sufficient for ourselves and seventeen boys. The rice was rapidly disappearing. If we did not start at once, we should be worse off than we had been before. The Deva-deva policeman again shouted up to Iola and this time there came a reply. The Iola policeman would get us no carriers. We were not in his district and he took no responsibility for us. If we wanted his boys, we could come up and try to get them. Nasty little brute! Perhaps he regretted having sold me his lime-pot. At any rate, we knew where we stood with him.

Ward was wild with rage. I was to start down at dawn next morning with what boys I could muster, and take the birds. He would keep Koi and go up to Iola to settle accounts. He would turn out the entire population and catch up with me on the track. It seemed to me highly improbable that anything good could come of such rash action but it was certain that a move must be made next day.

We bundled up our remaining axes and trade knives, with some primitive stone-headed war clubs and adzes I had gathered, and gave them into the keeping of the policeman. I never thought to see them again but we could not take them. Our salt, flour and whatever else we could do without was to be left in the rest-house.

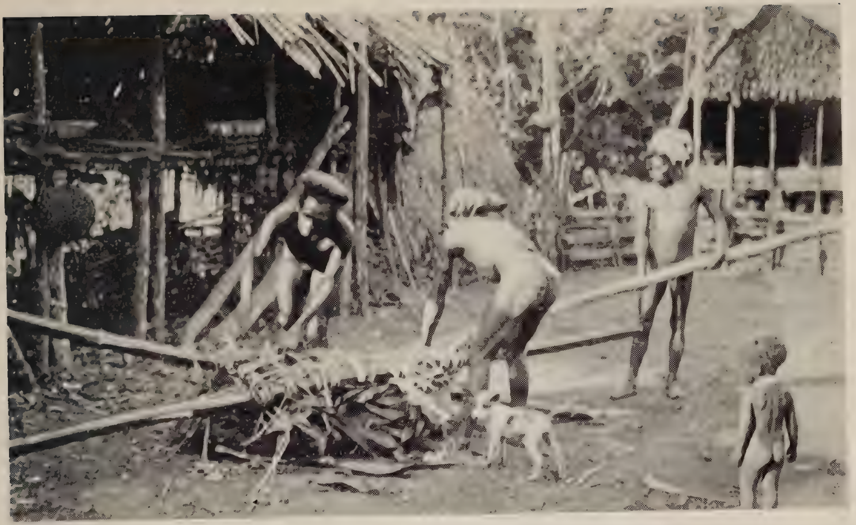
Word of our determination to leave must have reached whatever hunters were still in the bush, for toward evening two boys appeared, bearing the usual little bush baskets. One contained a beautiful cock blue, so that we now had four pairs of these lovely birds. The other held an unexpected prize—another long-tailed bird of paradise. We had made a small trade box into a double cage with a wire front. One side contained our first long-tail, the other was empty. We placed our new acquisition in this compartment. In color, it was practically an exact counterpart of the other but it was much smaller. We saw now what we could only detect by comparison: the first bird was a young male. The enforced delay had not been without its compensations. It had given us a pair of one of the rarest and most remarkable of all the birds of paradise.

The adult male of this species is a really wonderful creature. It is very large—a skin in the museum at Sydney measured forty-two inches from tip of beak to end of tail. The slender beak itself, deeply curved, is more than three inches long. The plumage is black above, shot with green and bronze reflections. The breast is a soft, olive gray, the elongated feathers on the flanks being tipped with deep black and purplish blue. From each side of the upper breast springs a great, triangular fan, edged with steely blue.

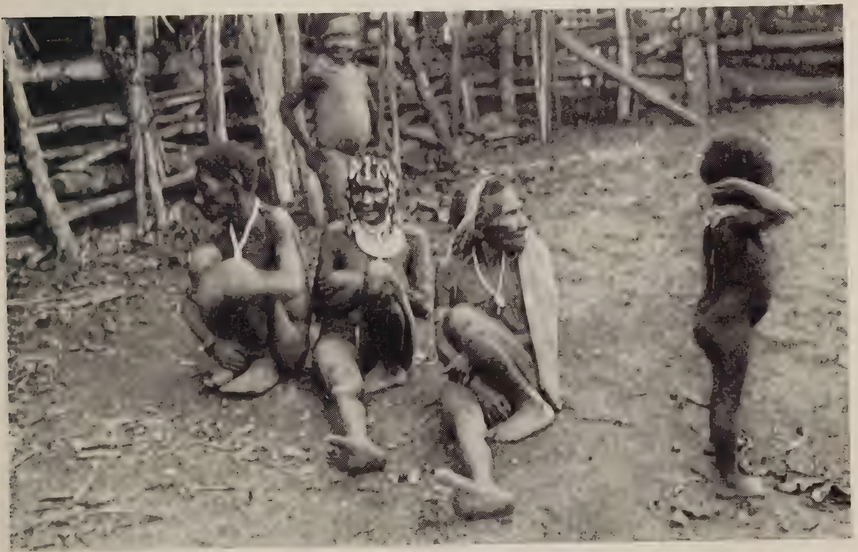
This feminine addition to our collection certainly was worth an ax, if only because she had proved the first bird a male. From the policeman's bundle we retrieved two of these valued articles, one in payment for each of our new birds. Half-heartedly, we told the lads to say in Iola that we were leaving in the morning, and that if no carriers appeared from that village the *taubada* would be up to make a call. Sheepishly, they agreed to transmit our message.

But they were the last of the Iola people we were to see, for on the morrow, at dawn, thirteen Deva-deva boys reported. Their number included several who had promised to come but who, up to this time, had failed to do so. They explained that they had had every intention of keeping their word but that there were matters of fence repairs and similar domestic items that must be seen to before they could leave. We were very glad to have them, of course. With thirty carriers we could manage, and I should not have to leave Ward behind, in what would have been a most precarious situation. But the delay came within an ace of proving fatal to our plans. We had carefully measured the quantity of rice remaining and estimated that if we could have started the day before, we should have had just sufficient to feed us back to Mekeo. Now we were a day late and we knew quite well that somewhere along the track we should get into difficulties.

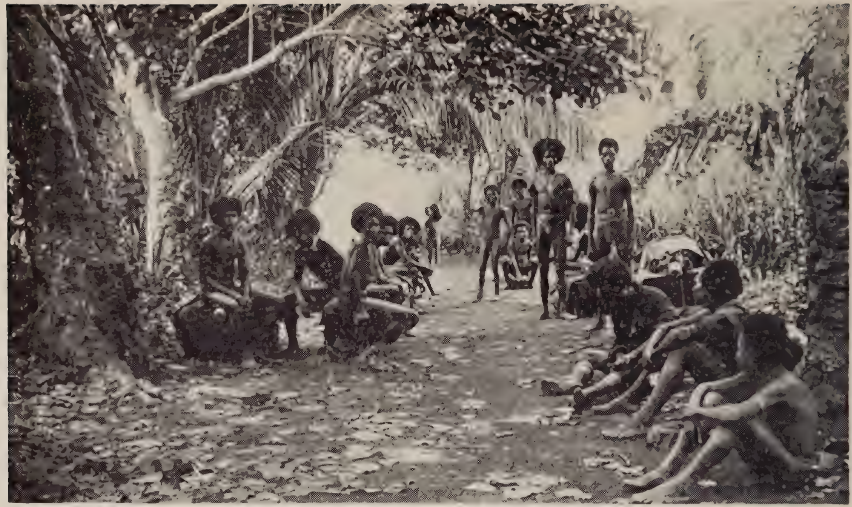
Anyway, we could start. Everything had to be made up into new loads and some of them were heavy enough. Our cages, brought up nested together, now had to be tied in twos, making a number of bulky loads. There was the usual jockeying on the part of the boys, the strongest teams seizing upon the lightest loads and attempting to leave with them. Ward and I both were in a state of high excitement by the time we finally took the track. The boys had gone on ahead, under the rather vague leadership of Koi. The sun was very hot as we started along the flank of the mountain toward Kebea, and Ward soon



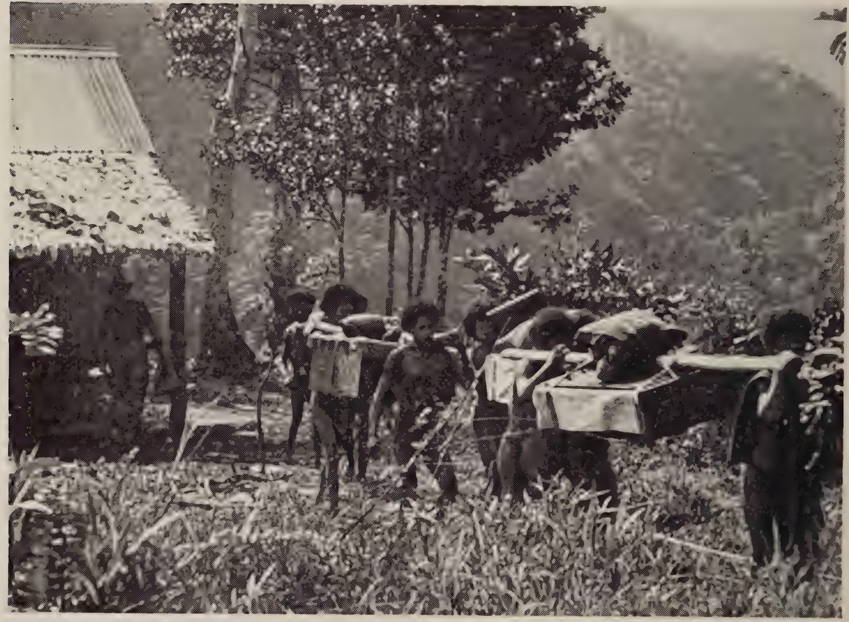
TARUVE MEN PREPARING TO KILL PIG FOR FEAST FOLLOWING DANCE.



MAFULU FAMILY AT TARUVE.



CARRIERS RESTING ON THE TRACK.



THE EXPEDITION LEAVING DEVA-DEVA.

began to complain of it. I knew well enough what was coming, and at every opportunity made an excuse for stopping in the shade to rest.

Our first stop was forced upon us. We were expecting to overtake the boys at any moment, and as we pushed along came suddenly upon a load of bird boxes, lying in the track, fully exposed to the sun. Cursing the careless indifference of the carriers who had deserted their charges, we moved the boxes into the shade and began to look about for the missing men. Poor Ward was fairly frothing and an unnatural blaze in his eyes warned me that the incident had hastened the coming break. We now heard a series of shrill squeals, and two or three hundred yards farther on we came upon the two deserters, on hands and knees, leaning over the edge of a grassy precipice. When we had joined the gazing party, we saw that the object of their interest was a mountain woman who was inching her painful way up toward the track. An almost incredible feat under the best of conditions, it was now doubly difficult, for one arm pressed to the climber's breast a tiny pig. It was he who made the row, not the woman. She toiled in silence, her face knotted in an agony of effort. A slip meant a bad fall. Slowly she drew herself up, clutching at grass and shrubs with her free hand, feeling cautiously for toe-holds. At last, when she had nearly reached the top, she found herself unable to pass an undercut overhang and looked up at us in despair. But now she was within reach and the boys calmly extended their hands and drew her to safety. Once up, the woman paused to examine her piglet, threw us a half-frightened glance and started back along the track without a word. Nonchalantly, the boys returned for their loads and followed behind us.

Soon after, we came upon the troop having a spell in one of the few cool spots and I asked Koi to find out the cause of the pig incident. It was simple enough. The leading carriers had surprised a half-wild sow and her brood. The startled pigs had rushed for safety and all but one had been successful. This little chap had dashed in and out between the boys' feet until, finding himself cut off by the last team, he had become so confused that he had slipped over the edge of the track. Fortunately, he had been caught in a small bush which had checked his fall. To the two boys, a pig overboard was a serious matter and they had started back with the thought of searching for the owner. But she had heard the squeals as she worked in her garden nearby and they had met her rushing to the rescue. Dropping their load without a thought, they had followed along to make sure the pig was saved. The woman's danger was no real concern of theirs and it never would have occurred to them that they might take the risks themselves. But a pig is a pig.

While I was working this story out of Koi, the Mekeo boys had started along, and Koi followed as soon as I would let him go. The mountain boys wanted to rest longer, and as Ward had had a good spell, we decided to go ahead of them. Ward had not gone far before I noticed that he was beginning to stagger. Soon, he began singing wildly and then he fell flat, face down in the track. When I helped him up, he was mumbling, saying that he had gone blind. His face was ghastly white but his eyes were burning. I tried to get him to stop but he refused. These sudden attacks of malaria are terrible things. Poor Ward knew well enough that he would never hold out to reach Matsika and that resting would not help him. Half delirious, he still held fast to the feeling that he must get as far as he could before he went down to stay. He would not let me help him but insisted on floundering ahead as best he could. He wove from side to side and soon he could go no more than fifty feet between falls. At last, when he struggled to rise, I held him down; he lacked the strength to resist. It was a tight fix for me. I could not leave Ward lying in the mud. Yet I must get on, for the Mekeo boys must already have reached Matsika and they would let the bird boxes lie wherever they happened to drop. Ward began to mutter again. He admitted he was done but insisted that he would soon be all right. Why was I such a fool as to let our birds die in the sun? I must leave at once; he would soon be along. I remembered stories I had heard and tales I had read of men who had lost everything rather than desert a fallen comrade. Certainly the proper thing was to stick. But the thought of our lovely collection was maddening. They were as dependent on me as Ward was; my ethical duty to them was overpowering.

The sound of voices brought the solution of my dilemma. The mountain boys were coming. When they came alongside, I stopped them and made them drop their loads. They had only a few birds and the spot was cool. Neither side could understand a word of the other's tongue, but by means of signs I tried to tell them that they were to stay with Ward and look after him until I could get down and send the Mekeo boys back for him. They nodded comprehension and sat down contentedly. I explained my plans to Ward. He said I was an ass not to have gone before and that I should probably find everything dead.

I tore down the track at top speed, leaving the cursed shotgun and my camera for the Mekeo boys to pick up. It took me over an hour, winding in and out along the steep sides of Mount Kebea, to reach the camp. Long before I got there, I could see the bird boxes lying in the open before the rest-house. But before I looked at them, I explained to Koi what had happened and told him four boys must go for Ward at once. Our talk was half pidgin, half Motu; before I had finished, the boys had seized carrying poles, and long strips of bark that had been used to tie the boxes. Whether from regard for Ward or some more subtle reason, they were all very frightened and eager to be off. I held them long enough to give them a blanket and the piece of "American cloth," for rain was close and a wetting would do Ward no good. As the party left, they were already starting to weave a rough sling in which to carry the sick *taubada.*

I turned to the birds, gasping in the heat, and soon had them arranged in the cool semi-darkness underneath the house. The only food I had for them was two small bunches of bananas. They were over-ripe and I knew they would not last long, for some had already been bruised by the rough handling of the boys. I picked out the best of the damaged ones, for they would be sour by morning, and gave the birds a good feed all around. I watched them eat with relief, for I had just barely saved them from the sun.

I heard the sudden clatter of rain and crawled out from beneath the house in time to see the mountain boys turning onto our little spur from the main track. As they did so, there was a rush from behind and the four Mekeo boys passed them on the run, two of them half dragging and half carrying Ward. He was only barely conscious but still had spunk enough to refuse to be taken in a sling. He told me afterward that the mountain boys had left him a few minutes after I did. The Mekeo boys had met them going up for Ward, who had made some further progress, crawling on his stomach, and they had caught them again just as they got back to the camp. I could not lay the Deva-deva boys' failure to obey orders to unwillingness—they simply hadn't understood. Mountain men, in the mountains, are supposed to walk rings around flat-footed lowland boys. But throughout our return journey, the Mekeo carriers were far superior and we had constantly to make long halts, in order to let the Deva-deva contingent catch up.

Ward was in very bad shape. The boys had done well to rush him back, for he had just barely avoided the rain. Koi and I dragged him into the house, stripped him, rubbed him dry and got him into clean clothes. I then sent Koi to make tea, while I covered the sick man with blankets, my jacket and everything else I could find. I dosed him well with quinine and whiskey, and when the tea was ready, made him drink two steaming pannikins of that. He slipped off into unconsciousness soon after and I left him, to dole out the boys' rice.

There was pitifully little of it and I cheated the boys as much as I dared—after all, we had to get them home as well as the birds. I looked longingly, again, at the rice stored in the house. Just one mat would see us out. But the law of the bush was too strong for me—I couldn't touch it. If only we had had some word from Champion, at Kambisi! I didn't even know whether or not he had received my message. Nearly two months later, at Yule Island, I learned from Grist that the note really had reached Kambisi, where Champion had found it on returning from a patrol. He had actually sent a sergeant and two policemen down to Deva-deva, with orders to give us two bags of the Matsika rice, as well as a dressing down for allowing ourselves to get out of food in such a place. But we had been gone a week when they arrived, so that neither service was ever rendered.

It was a restless and dismal night for me: pouring rain, food low, Ward on his back. I got up at intervals to look at him, and at midnight was glad to find him in a light sweat and able to do a little feeble cursing. I dozed off toward morning and did not wake until after six, when I found, to my surprise, that rain was still falling hard. This was the only occasion I can remember when rain fell before noon. It was bad luck for us, because it meant we could not make a start—Mekeo boys are opposed to rain, and, besides, the footing on the always slippery track would be impossible. I took a look at Ward, who showed no sign of life, except for rather labored breathing. Koi had the tea ready, but before drinking it I went below to look after the birds. They were right enough, and I gave them food and fresh water, so that they would be ready if the rain stopped.

Just as I was finishing, I saw the feet and lower legs of two boys pass by, going toward the track. It looked suspicious and I crawled out to investigate. But before I could entirely emerge, I heard the old familiar roar and out rushed Ward, barefoot and hatless. Amazed, I stopped where I was, with only my head projecting from beneath the house. He halted the two boys in their tracks and shouted for Koi. If they meant to desert, he would have their hides. The two suspects were mountain boys, one a grown man, named Tamali (Samuel!), the other a youth. Both were well wrapped in bark cloth and bits of sacking, and Tamali carried a huge and heavy war club of roughly carved hardwood—the only one I ever saw. They were very frightened and haltingly explained, through Koi, that the youth had relatives at Valia, the small village high up on the ridge behind us. He thought he might be able to find food there, and Tamali had volunteered as escort. They felt they could be back before the rain cleared. Only half satisfied, Ward told them they had "damn well *better* come back" and let them go.

I went inside, found Ward a pair of dry socks and coaxed him into his boots. It was a repetition of what had happened at Diene, on the way up. He was perfectly normal though rather weak. If he could only get some tea from that blasted, lazy Koi, he'd be right. And when he got it, he was. Marvellous fellow!

Rain continued to fall as the boys cooked their rice and we ate a meagre biscuit and drank our tea. Long after we were finished, we sat about disconsolately, hoping for a let-up. Tamali and the lad came back, empty-handed—there was no food at Valia.

About 8:30, just as we were deciding that it was too late to make a start and that we were in for another day's delay, the rain stopped suddenly. The boys, delighted, tied up their loads in record time and we were off. We did not spell until we got down to Dilava, where I had Maino, the camera boy, unload. The sun was now shining brightly, and in spite of the unwonted rain the air was crystal clear and the outlines of the mountains were uncannily sharp. I made up for my former failure here by successful exposures of both film and plates.

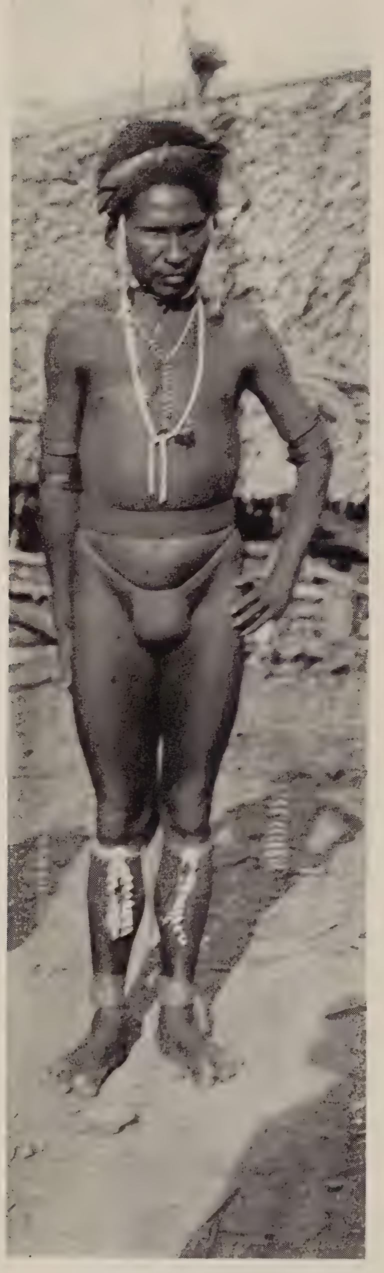
When we reached the river at the bottom of the sharp drop below Dilava, we found it a roaring torrent, which the loaded boys could not cross. Bioto and Inawaibui Maino, leaving their birds behind, managed to get over, carrying an ax, and felled a tree, over which the boys walked, while Ward and I crawled. The climb to the top was hard but not so hard as the opposite side had been on the way up. Probably that was because I was in better condition. Ward was holding up well and showed no signs of the terrible attack he had suffered.

Just before the summit is reached, there is a tremendous, ascending horseshoe. The Mekeo boys had gone on ahead, the mountain division was behind. As Ward and I reached the apex—or what might correspond to such a point in a horseshoe!—we decided it might be well to spell for a little, to give the laggards time to catch up. On our left, the mountain rose sheer into the sky; at the right, it dropped dizzily downward into unseen depths. There was no place to sit, unless we wished to dangle our feet; we chose to rest by leaning against the bank behind our backs. We had not been there more than a minute when we heard the clatter of rolling stones. About ten yards back a bushel or two of small rocks slid down the mountainside. It was nothing of any consequence but we decided that perhaps we had rested long enough. We had gained the base of the far side of the horseshoe, when the valley was filled with the terrific crash and thunder of a landslide. The sound was too overwhelming for us to locate the position of the slip. But, without a word, we both instinctively began to race for the higher ground at the end of the curve. My own thought was that from there we could look back across the notch, which we had just rounded, and be able to see what had happened.

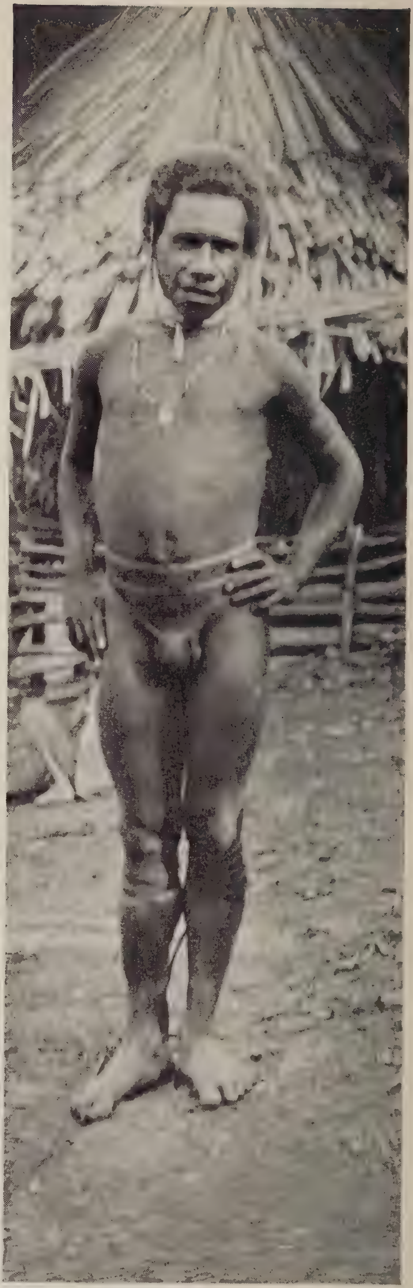
We reached the point of vantage, excited and out of breath. As I had expected, we could look down on the entire loop of the horseshoe. At its inner point, just where I judged we had been resting, a great, raw scar extended straight down the side of the mountain. Eagerly, I shouted to Ward that that was where the slide had occurred. But he insisted that I was mad; that scar had been there when we were going up. We argued the point hotly, as men will under stress. But our words were cut short by an ominous sound and we both looked across in time to see what seemed to us half the mountain beginning to move. It was a curious effect at first; whole phalanxes of forest giants, perfectly upright, moved downward, slowly at first,

AYA, ONE OF THE EXPEDITION'S BIRD BOYS.

KOI, COOKY-BOY AND INTERPRETER.



MAFULU *DUBU* BOY.



MAFULU MAN.

then gaining speed. As they progressed, their tops began to tip outward and they fell, in a confused and appalling tangle. Many were hurled clear and flew cleanly through the air, end over end. Huge rocks, as big as houses, crashed among them. With the roar of a thousand thunders, the mass tore down the mountainside into the abyss, carrying all before it. From far below, the awful sound echoed and reverberated. A cloud of dust and débris filled the valley.

Ward and I were completely stunned but slowly we began to realize what we had escaped. Cautiously, we started to retrace our steps. We wanted to have a look at it. And what about the mountain boys, somewhere behind us?

We could not find the place where we had rested, for it had been completely obliterated. At the edge of the slide, the track had been cut cleanly, as though with a huge knife. Extending right around the apex of the horseshoe, and encroaching on its sides, the face of the mountain lay bare and smooth, the crevices filled with small stones and loose, raw earth. Above us the wet, naked cliff glistened in the sun. No doubt the unusual rain of the morning had loosened its thin covering of earth, which had hung there, waiting for the jar which would hurl them into the abyss. Perhaps our passing had been sufficient to cause the first small movement we had noticed.

I thought of the mountain boys. Had they been caught by the landslide? Had the soft thud of their naked feet brought the mountain down upon them? If so, there would have been no chance of escape. It was a dreadful thought. But Ward was philosophic—the boys could not have reached the place or we should have heard them as we rested. The overflowing river would have held them longer than it did the larger and stronger men of Mekeo.

Well, say they were still coming along. How were they to pass that awful gash? There was no sign of a track. Holding firmly to a small bush, I stood with one foot on solid ground and gingerly touched the loose earth of the scar with the other. Instantly a clatter of small stones and débris followed. I stepped back hastily. To attempt to cross would be suicide.

I was anxious to stay and see what happened but Ward insisted there was no need. The boys would cross. Mountain people thought nothing of landslides. And we must be looking after our birds.

It was a long, tiring walk down to Dieni, and the track, especially near Fofofofo, was in dreadful condition. Toward the end, I began to feel a bit feverish myself, but Ward, now fresh as a daisy, cheered me on. At last we topped a sharp rise and stood in the little hollow that held Dieni. Koi had profited by the cursing he had received at Matsika and the bird boxes had been stowed in the shade. We went through them carefully, giving the birds fresh water and the last of the bananas. There weren't enough to satisfy them and we had to make up with biscuit, crushed and moistened with water. They were standing the rough handling well and everything was in good shape.

I thought constantly of the mountain boys. I even tried to explain the situation to Koi but could not make him understand. "Mountain fall down" meant nothing to him. I honestly expected never to see them again, but about an hour after we had arrived we heard voices from the track and presently the missing crew arrived, marching unconcernedly in single file. Without pausing, they passed the boys' house and our own, going straight to a spot nearby where three or four bare poles marked the site of an ancient lean-to. Here they deposited their loads and proceeded to make themselves at home. I was surprised and delighted to see them, and amazed by their calmness. I thought they might explain to Koi what had happened but this they had no intention of doing. *Nothing* had happened.

Anxious to get the truth of it, I assailed Koi again. With every variation of word, gesture and pantomime that I could think of, I tried to make him see what I meant. At first he listened attentively but with no glint of understanding. Finally, he became sullen before my determined questioning. All I could get from him was "*Diba lasi!*" No understand! I only knew that the mountain boys had passed. I never found out how they did it.

CHAPTER VIII

HARD GOING

THAT night, at Dieni, as we portioned out the rice, we knew we were close to the end of our string. That evening's dole of rice was very nearly the last. There was just enough remaining for one scant meal all around. Besides the rice, we had half a dozen ship's biscuits, a little tea and plenty of trade tobacco. And that had to see us, with our birds and boys, down to Mekeo, three days' march away. The upland and lowland factions among the boys would not mix, at least as far as eating and sleeping were concerned. They maintained two separate camps and, in consequence, two separate cooking fires. Koi lent the men of the mountains his spare kerosene tins, and while two lots of rice boiled, a hundred yards apart, Ward and I discussed our situation. It didn't look very pretty.

We had said nothing to the boys about our predicament, but in the midst of the discussion Koi appeared. The boys had been talking over the food problem; they knew as well as we exactly how much rice remained. They had decided that the only way out was to attempt to make the three days' march to Inawaibui in one day. They were willing to try it if we were. Ward and I, of course, had considered this plan but had discarded it as impossible. We had felt that the boys would be unwilling to undertake it, loaded as they were. We estimated the distance as a good thirty-five miles and the going was rough. The chances that any of us would get through were slim. Yet what to do?

We finally decided to take it on. Better to fail, trying, than to face certain disaster where we were. Long before dawn we were astir. The last of the rice was cooked and divided between the boys and the birds. Ward and I drank all the tea we could hold, with a biscuit each. The remainder of the hard-tack we pounded up and mixed with the birds' rice. It was poor fare for them but it would have to carry them through the day, at least.

It was after six before we could get started but we made Kubuna in exactly four hours, including time out for a short spell at the usual halfway point. We had left a few pounds of rice at Kubuna and had planned on it for a possible noonday meal. But Jack Seymour, the muley man, had placed a new lock on the rest-house door and had so arranged it that the door could not be opened without doing irreparable damage. No hope there!

Desperately, we took the track again. Halfway between Kubuna and Aropokena, we saw before us an open valley, which had been ravaged by fire. Little mounds of ashes still smoked and smouldered. A few tall trees, the trunks badly scorched, stood high above the ruin. But the lower bush had been almost entirely destroyed. There was practically no shade and we could see the heat waves dancing in the unscreened blaze of the sun.

The mountain boys had dropped far behind by now and Ward and I had forged ahead of the panting Mekeo crowd. We stopped in the cool of the forest, leaning against a dripping, mossy bank. We wanted to be as fresh as possible before we stepped out into that withering glare. It was well past noon, and just because we had no food we were hungry. We never did eat at noon while we were on the march but this was different. Then Ward came to the rescue.

While I had been getting together those parts of the outfit that I was to take from New York, an explorer friend had insisted that I take along at least a couple of tins of the Army's chocolate Emergency Ration. It might save a life in an emergency. The suggestion had seemed sound and I had added two little pocket tins to my list. I gave one tin to Ward, lost my own and forgot the matter entirely. But Ward, strangely enough, had taken the Emergency Ration seriously. Here was the Emergency and from the pocket of his shirt he now produced the Ration—four thin, flat slabs of sweet chocolate, wrapped in tin-foil. The container he had long since discarded as useless weight. I hailed these life-savers with joy. As we happily munched, I dilated on the foresight of the friend who had recommended them. Our spirits rose and we were ready for anything. Or at least we would be, after we had had a drink of water.

When the boys came up, we asked Koi how long it would be before we should reach a brook. He pointed across the smoking valley and said, "Plenty *ranu* stop there." It looked rather far to us and we should have preferred to have it stop nearer. However, we should have to go where it was if we wanted it and stepped out of the forest. To call that place a furnace would not do it justice, for not only did the still hot ashes burn our feet but the sun beat down with an intensity I had never before experienced. I watched the boys intently, wondering how my own bare feet would have liked it. But their leathery soles were immune and sunshine was their birthright. They marched with stolid indifference, their minds on the plentiful food of Inawaibui.

Ward and I were soon in real difficulties, for our thirst was intensified. Our clothing was saturated with perspiration and I cursed my woolly undershirt. I thought of tales of persons lost in the desert and felt that all descriptions I had read were inadequate. My tongue swelled, my throat burned, my mouth was cotton. God bless my explorer friend and his Emergency Ration! He should have mentioned a canteen of water to go with it. He certainly had never explored a desert or even a burned waste in the tropics.

Eventually we reached the forest on the far side. An obscure and little-used native trail leaves the main track here and strikes straight through the bush for Inawaibui. There was another little cache of rice at Aropokena, and if we left the track we should miss it. But that way was much longer, and if we failed to get into the rest-house we should be worse off than before. And Koi insisted that not far in the bush we should find that elusive *ranu.* Well, water was what we wanted, not rice, so we turned off without further hesitation.

The mountain boys were nowhere to be seen, but we placed a leafy branch across the main track to indicate that we had turned. It was heavenly on that faint forest trail. The great trees closed overhead, enveloping us in a delicious coolness. The boys had to go ahead, for often there was nothing for a white man to follow, and only the keen eyes of a native could discern the way of the track. Ward and I should have been quite happy now, if only that burning, insistent thirst could be eased. Koi said we should find water soon, but we had gone several miles before we finally came to a series of shallow, muddy pools, with not a trickle between them. It was not the place we should have chosen to drink but it was water. Disregarding the swarms of black and voracious mosquitoes, the first we had seen for weeks, we drank our fill.

After our stop at the water hole, we took up the march slowly but doggedly. We were thoroughly crocked, boys and all, and we still had many miles to go. Our friend Silly, who had acquired fame at Deva-deva as the usurious lender of tobacco, had pegged out completely and Koi had had to take his load. The track now followed a thin tongue of high bush, which projected far out among sandy, grassy foothills, extending northward from Aropokena, and skirting the great Bioto Swamp. Just before we reached the end of this forested ridge, we came to a spot where a thinning of the jungle gave a marvellous view of the swamp itself, spreading, smooth and green, almost to the horizon. Hanging high above its farther edge, we could just discern the outlines of the mountains we had left so recently, dim in the haze of mid-afternoon. Ward thought this the finest view of the Central Division. Certainly it is the most extensive in Mekeo.

We were soon in the open, panting up and down little, open hills. And now the boys began to talk of the "big water," evidently something to be dreaded. I knew enough of our position to be aware that we must cross the swamp before we could reach Inawaibui, and thought perhaps there might be a stream to ford. But I soon learned why the boys disliked the "big water." The track was skirting the swamp, when it made a sharp turn, straight into it. Only Koi and the Inawaibui Maino remained with us; the other boys had gone ahead. It was fortunate for Ward and myself that these two had stayed, otherwise I do not see how we should have crossed. For what we saw was a tunnel, perhaps six feet wide, close to a half mile long, made through towering reeds. Projecting above the dark, oily water, we could see the tips of crossed poles, set at intervals of from ten to fifteen feet. Here and there, slender branches had been thrust into the roots of the reeds, evidently for hand-holds. The water was obviously deep, the bottom, if any, was certainly the mud of the ages, and there was no sign of a bridge.

The boys wasted no time in explanations. They had deposited their load on the bank and to it Ward and I added what we were carrying. It looked as though we should be fortunate if we got across ourselves. I thought, among other things, that if that blessed gun should happen to stay on the wrong side of Bioto Swamp, I should have, at least, a good excuse for not returning it to its owner.

Joining hands, we plunged in, Koi first. When he was waist deep, I saw him feel about with his feet and rise in the water. When my turn came, I followed suit and found that a pole, perhaps three inches in diameter, was laid lengthwise, supported by crossed sticks, and lying about three feet under water. I teetered along this but soon found that the hand-holding formation was impossible, for I started to sway and only saved myself by catching one of the projecting poles. From then on, it was every man for himself. The spots where the poles overlapped were the most difficult, for it was necessary to balance on one foot and feel with the other for the next support. I had no idea that I should ever get across. Every inch gained was a triumph in itself. I became so absorbed in self-preservation that I did not know I was actually over until I was aroused by Koi's shouts and looked up to see him waving to me to step off my perch into the shallow water. When I had joined him where the swamp was at least less liquid than water, I turned to watch Ward and Maino. Their struggles seemed both Herculean and hopeless. But if we could cross, they could. They did, quite safely.

For once, Ward and I cared nothing for what might have happened to our birds. If the mountain boys could negotiate the path of the landside, Mekeo would not be stopped by mere poles under water. We dropped in the ooze, rejoicing in its flaccid support. We heard Koi and

Maino splashing back for their load; we heard them splash past us as they returned. We never even looked up.

After ten minutes of this, the old urge began to work again. And the mosquitoes were doing their bit. We struggled to our feet and began to plow our way along. I was completely mechanical by now and only walked from habit. We were in the same tunnel, now just wide enough to afford passage. But the reeds had given way to tall saw grass, that closed above our heads. The jagged edges tore at our arms; we stopped and rolled down our sleeves to protect them. We had to crook our elbows before our faces to protect our eyes.

After an interminable distance, during which I lost all sense of time, we came suddenly to a clearing at the edge of the swamp. And growing in it were the largest and healthiest taro plants I had ever seen. Inawaibui gardens! There was nothing else they could be. We must have made it! Forgetful of fatigue, we pressed forward eagerly. Soon we burst out of the bush upon a scene that seemed a miracle.

We had come out at the log bridge which carries the Bioto track across a small stream that flows from the swamp. Our bird boxes were disposed in shady spots along the track. On the logs sat the boys, stuffing themselves with the great yellow bananas of Mekeo. We rushed to the cages. The birds were having the gorge of their lives and were washing it down with fresh water.

Koi, bursting with pride, gave us the explanation. The Wise Boy's wife had her garden nearby. As soon as they had arrived, he had gone there and cut down a bunch of bananas, dead ripe under a covering of bark, in which they had been wrapped to protect them from the fruit bats. The boys had learned their lesson by now. They still thought us mad to waste good food on useless birds. But they knew we wished to waste it and had gone through them, cage by cage. When Koi arrived on this pleasant scene, he was inspired to give them water. It was a happy occasion for us. We had got through, birds and all. And the Mekeo boys again had shown themselves worthy of trust.

With a sense of tremendous release, we fell to on the bananas. Each of us must have got through a dozen. And when we were thirsty, grinning boys handed us fresh young coconuts, with neat holes chopped in their tops. There was nothing more to wish for and we all lay there, sprawled at full length, until the gathering dusk warned us that we had got out of the bush none too soon.

Nothing had been heard of the mountain troop. Where they were, we did not know. There still remained two miles between us and the village but that, on the flat, clean Mekeo track, was nothing. It was quite dark when we drew up before the rest-house. But before we had finished trussing up our bird boxes underneath the house, safe from marauding dogs and pigs, the women began to arrive with food. Sweet potatoes, taro, bananas. Fires roared, tired but happy boys feasted again. Ward and I drank our tea, and wished the bananas we had eaten at the bridge had left room for more.

In the midst of the excitement, the thirteen mountain boys arrived. They were thoroughly exhausted and nearly famished. While they were being fed, Ward and I looked to their birds. They, too, had suffered from the trip and had missed the chance to feed at the bridge. For an hour, we took turns holding the lantern while they ate and drank.

We turned in as soon as boys and birds had eaten their fill, and awoke much refreshed. Our first thought was of our collection and we went below to them as soon as the daylight was strong enough. We were prepared for the worst, for our birds had taken a gruelling they could not fairly be expected to endure. One of our lovely blue cocks, probably the last one to come in, was dead; it was a blow but we had to take the good with the bad. Several of the magnificents were the worse for the trip and had been quarrelling amongst themselves. But the remainder required only rest and an abundance of food to regain top form.

None of the Inawaibui boys who had deserted at Devadeva was in evidence but we recruited a number of the younger generation to carry odd lots, and set out, in high fettle, for Inawaia. Our feet fairly flew over the broad track, each team trying to get the lead. I was anxious to keep ahead, so that I could set up my camera and film the entrance into the village. For four miles, I kept my place at the head of the file, the boys behind almost treading on my heels. But then I had to give up and admit I wasn't yet equal to racing Mekeo boys in their own district. As I fell out of line, the file tore past. Master Koi was on the end and meant to ignore me but I shouted for him to stop. He slowed down long enough to receive an order that the boys were to wait for me outside the village, and rushed on.

Ward, who had waited to see that nothing was left behind, now came along, and at a more leisurely pace we followed the boys. But I need not have been so concerned about holding them, for two hundred yards short of the entrance to Inawaia we came upon them. They were busily engaged in primping, teasing out their fuzzy hair with long-handled combs of bamboo, decorating it with such flowers as could be found in the nearby bush, and inserting fresh green leaves in their arm and leg bands. They would not enter the village which represented the end of their journey until they could look their best. I had plenty of time to rig my camera and was ready for them when they entered, each man treading firmly, head held high. But even in their moment of pride, they would not violate the custom that forbids them the use of the middle road through the village. Our birds of paradise reached the rest-house, at the far end, by way of the path that follows the boundary fence, behind the houses.

The return to Inawaia was a real home-coming for us, and we moved into the rest-house with a feeling of perfect familiarity. I smiled as I thought of the sensations of my first arrival: my awe of the painted dubu boys, my fears of cannibals. All this had long since passed. These boys were now my friends. No cannibal had admittedly sought my poor bones for the pot.

Our bird boxes were soon arranged on the broad, airy veranda of the police boys' house. The spare cages we had stored there had not been disturbed, and were brought into use to give the birds more room. Our collection had gone as long as it would on improvised fare, and we had got down with it none too soon. The prepared food I had brought from New York, mixed with boiled rice, made a nourishing and palatable diet, on which the birds quickly began to improve. Occasionally, we could give them a treat from our little store of preserved egg yolk, or even a fresh egg, boiled hard and grated, the product of the local hen. There was an abundance, of course, of the incomparable Mekeo bananas, of which the birds had an unlimited supply.

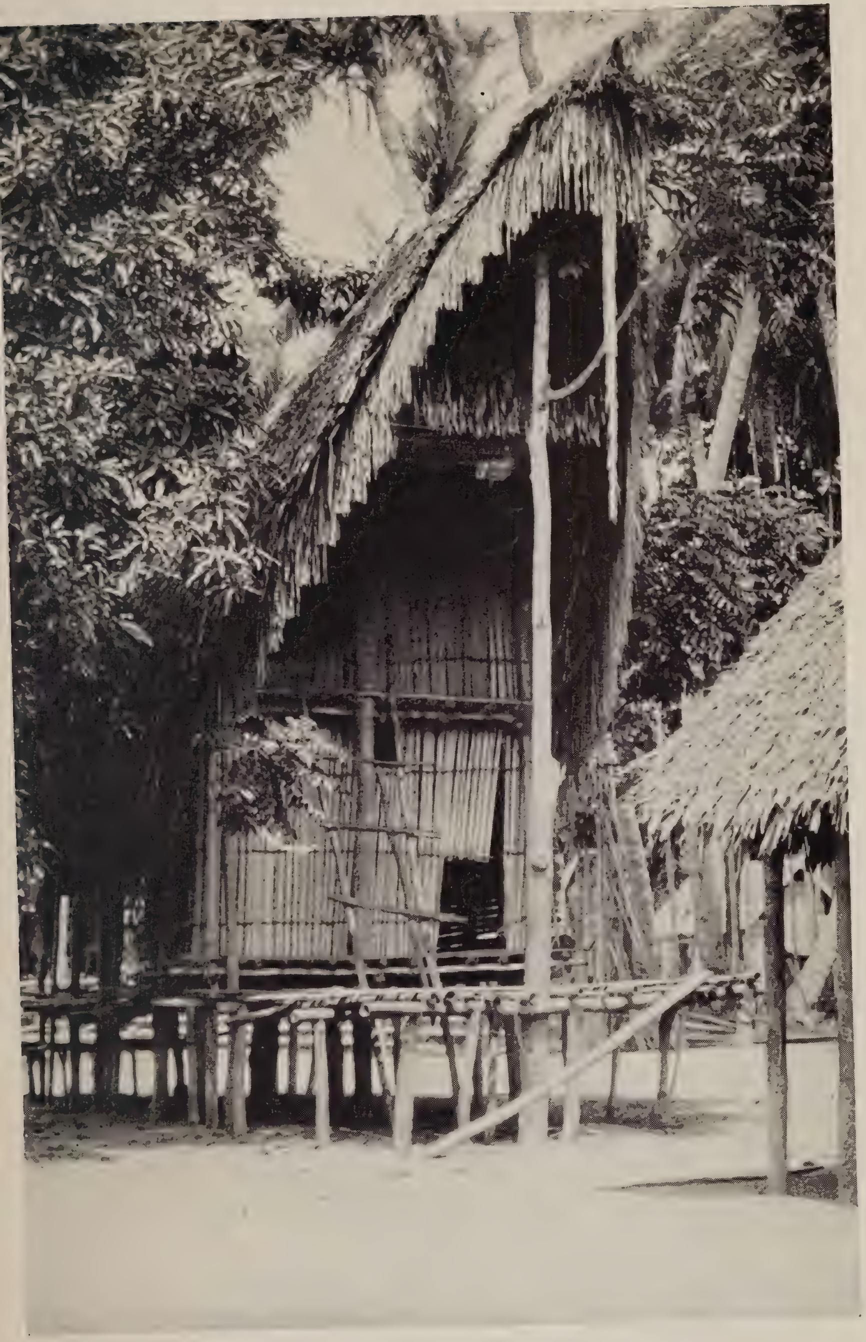
On the next morning after our return to Inawaia, troops of strange boys began to stream through the village. Young chaps, for the most part, but some were married men, accompanied by their wives. The latter invariably were loaded with heavy nets of food and pots. Always, they paused for a look at the birds. When the crowds got too thick, we had to stir them on, for while the inmates of our boxes were accustomed, by now, to almost everything, their patience had its limits. Koi and odd carrier boys, now released, acted the part of showmen, calling the visitors' attention to the strange birds from the mountains, and giving their names. Most of these occasioned no comment but always, at the mention of *"Manika!"* there was a rush forward to the cages of the Prince Rudolph's blues, accompanied by exclamations of surprise and the clicking of thumb-nails on upper teeth. They would stand and stare as long as we would let them, repeating the name over and over. This bird meant far more to them than any of the others, as it certainly did to the Deva-deva people. In the end, we had to drop the "Hessian" fronts over the boxes and tell the boys to keep all strangers away.

After this procession had continued for some time, I asked Koi what was in the wind.

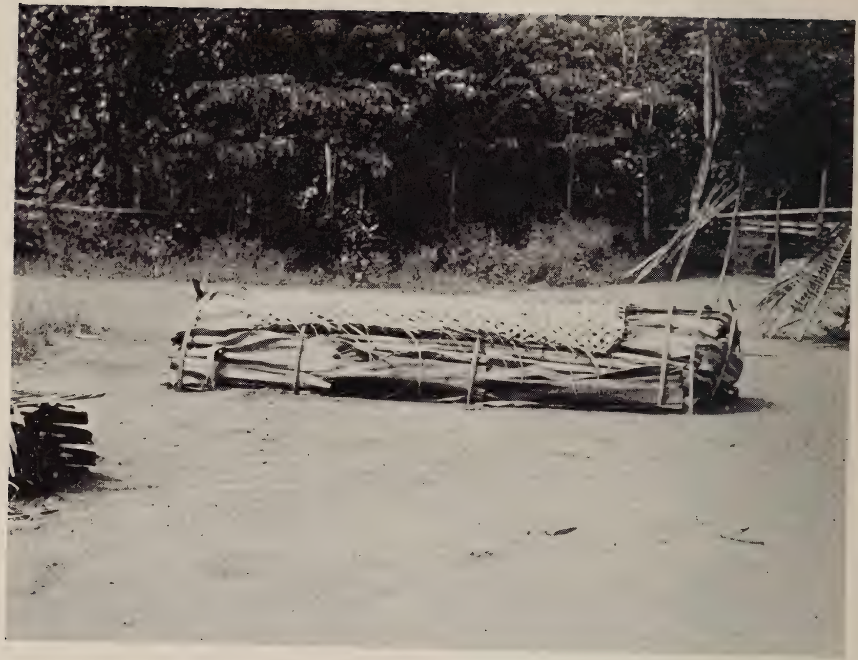
"Policeman come," he said.

I could get no further explanation from him but presently, in the midst of a string of new arrivals, there appeared a native constable, in his full uniform of blue tunic and *rami,* shouldering a rifle. This looked like business and we had not long to wait to know what it was. For directly behind him came five or six more police, fully armed and headed by a young white man, in khaki blouse and shorts. This was Patrol Officer Smith, the swanky and capable assistant of Champion, stationed at Kambisi. Smith was a genial, friendly chap, hardly more than a boy but, like all patrol officers, distinctly up to his job. He had come down from Kambisi to recruit two hundred carriers for the transportation of rice to the outlying station.

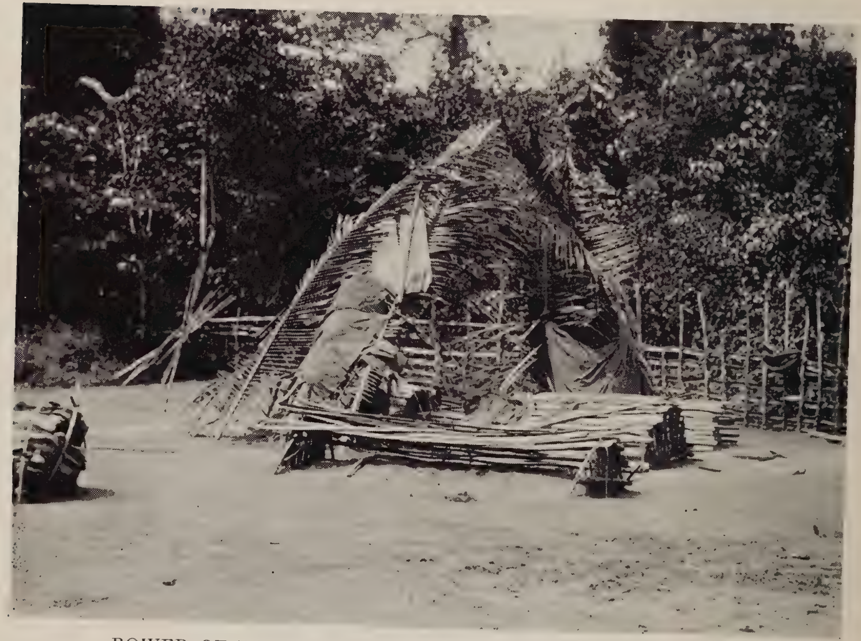
After lunch from the top of one of our trade-boxes,



BOYS' HOUSE OR *DUBU* AT INAWAIA.



BODY PREPARED FOR MEKEO BURIAL.



BOWER OF PALM FRONDS ERECTED OVER BURIAL PLACE.

enlivened by a ludicrous rivalry between Koi and Smith's more experienced cooky-boy, the police sergeant's whistle summoned the men of the village to gather for a lecture. This sergeant, by the way, was a splendid chap. He spoke excellent English and Smith said he knew every native dialect in the Central Division equally well—at least, all with which he had come into contact. It is natives of this type that make the patrol officer's success possible.

The entire population of Inawaia turned out, the men standing in a semicircle, the women and children in the background. They were abashed and ill at ease, for since there had been no local policeman, the condition of the village and the neighboring tracks had been allowed to slump. They knew they were in for it and they were quite right. In no mincing terms, Smith pointed out their failings. If they were not immediately set straight, every man jack would go to jail at Kairuku. He was leaving now for Jesubaiboa. In the morning, ten boys were to go there from Inawaia, to help carry for him to the next village, where he would gather more carriers.

Not much of this harangue, of course, was understood by the listeners, though they hung their heads in shame. But all of it, and probably much more, was conveyed to them by the able sergeant. He brought his tirade to a magnificent climax and dismissed them abruptly by a blast on his commanding whistle.

Smith now explained to us that he had meant to stay in the rest-house, but since we were there first, he would go back to Jesubaiboa. He left almost at once, saying he would return, in a day or two, on his way to the mountains. We were to expect the passing of his carriers to continue, for as he recruited them, they were despatched to Aropokena, where the rice would be brought by launch.

The appearance of submission with which Smith's orders had been received was evidently assumed, for while we were at breakfast the next morning a party of six police streaked past us into the village, coming from the direction of Jesubaiboa. Their coming occasioned a terrible uproar, the people pouring like flies from every house. But to them the constables paid no attention. Dividing into parties of twos, they went directly to the *dubus*, from which no one, as yet, had poured. The inmates, cut off at front and rear, had no hope of escape. Before they were quite certain of what was up, the unmarried boys of the village were gathered in a frightened herd and driven off toward Jesubaiboa, to the tune of screams and threats from friends and relatives.

There was great excitement in the village. I feel sure that if there had been some warning, there would have been armed resistance. Men ran about, brandishing spears; women shouted invectives, urging them to go to Jesubaiboa and rescue the prisoners. Koi explained that the raid was entirely justified, for the ten carriers ordered by Smith had failed to appear.

The uproar continued all morning, but at noon it was brought to a fresh and more vociferous climax by the return of some of the boys. Ten of their number had gone on, as carriers, to the next village. But another ten, for their sins, had been sent down to jail. I really thought something might come of it this time, but after the first outburst rage gave way to sorrow. Fathers walked behind their houses, weeping; mothers went indoors and gave voice to loud sounds of mourning.

A small man, hardly able to control his grief, stopped before our house. Between his sobs he explained that young Okoa, who had been with us at Deva-deva, was among the prisoners. Surely, at a word from us, whom he had served so well, he would be released. Now, my sympathies were entirely with Smith. He had to do his job. He had ordered ten carriers, who had failed to appear. They must be punished, and this the people knew quite well. Moreover, if I should have the temerity to attempt to interfere, I should probably be rebuffed for my trouble.

On the other hand, I liked Okoa, and the little man was rather pitiful. After all, Okoa had just come back from a trip and was really exempt from conscription. I noticed that all the rest of our boys had been excused. Perhaps Smith had not understood this. Perhaps if it were explained to him, he might reconsider. And we did want Okoa, brightest of the lot, for a bird-boy. I was anxious not to offend Smith, for I planned to ask a special favor of him when he returned. But I would risk it. Hastily I scribbled a note. The anxious father was waiting, his crotched stick in readiness. In no time he was off down the track, the scrap of paper held before him, like a flag of truce, a friend forming a body-guard at the rear.

Just before dark they returned, bringing Master Okoa, still torn between fear and joy. They brought, also, a *chit* from Smith, saying that our boy was delivered herewith, that he wished us joy in him, and that he would be along soon. I thought it very decent of him.

Okoa was immediately signed on, and reported for duty the next morning. He seemed to feel that he was really only paroled to us. Otherwise, I doubt if we should have got him, for while he was both intelligent and amusing, he was extremely lazy, even when judged by New Guinea standards. His tasks included fetching water, which Father Bronzer was good enough to let us have from a well of dubious character in the Mission grounds, cleaning cages and water tins, and helping Koi boil water for tea. His spare time was spent in sleeping on the veranda, behind the bird boxes, usually in company with Koi.

Smith's recruits continued to pass through the village, and finally the young officer himself again appeared. He reported trouble in one of the villages, where a pair of his police had got into a rough-and-tumble fight. They had managed to get clear and had returned to him with six of the ringleaders in custody. These had been sent off to Kairuku and a party of six police had immediately returned to the village and collected twenty carriers, without further trouble. Smith was now ready to proceed to Aropokena, where he would pick up his rice, and with his huge team begin the long march to Kambisi.

Could he do anything for us before he left? Well, yes, he could. We had no king birds of paradise and no rifle birds, since these are found at medium altitudes, where we had not stopped. Ward and I were too much occupied to leave on another trip and there was only one native in all Mekeo who had more than a glimmer of understanding in such matters. That man was Opu Kaki, village policeman of Jesubaiboa. In his younger days Opu, as Ward's head boy, had acquired a considerable degree of skill. How much of this had survived Opu's advance to opulence was doubtful. Ward was certain that it had been lost entirely and was equally positive that no village policeman could be good for anything. However, I was anxious to try and had approached Opu on the subject. He was willing to go but could not do so without permission. And that permission was what I was gunning for.

I explained the situation to Smith. He replied that he doubted his authority to give Opu leave of absence but finally consented to do so when I pointed out that a week would be sufficient and that nothing terrible was likely to happen in Jesubaiboa during that period. Before he left he exacted from me a promise that I would let him know if I heard of a good job when I returned to New York. Patrolling was all right but there was nothing in it. As I watched him march arrogantly down the middle street of the village, at the head of his men, I wondered how many boys, chained to city desks, would be delighted to exchange places with him. And I wondered, too, how many of them would have the physical strength, ability and bounce to carry it off half as well as he.

Smith's return to the mountains gave me the chance for which I had been hoping, to retrieve the bundle of stone-headed pineapple clubs I had left at Deva-deva. I had gathered them against the protests of Ward, who had known quite well that we should be unable to carry them. But now, with Smith's consent, I got four boys to go along with his party: two to bring back the cages and rice left at Aropkena, two to go on to Deva-deva for my clubs. The little cache of rice we had been unable to retrieve at Dieni would feed them. This all worked out to perfection and eventually all of our scattered possessions were returned to us. From Deva-deva, we got not only our clubs, with the trade knives and axes, but our bag of salt and a half-consumed tin of flour. The latter the boys had allowed to get wet, so that it was quite ruined.

As soon as Ward had left, we sent for Opu and handed him the written permission, which, of course, was entirely unintelligible to him. But he was willing to take our word for it and announced his readiness to start on the following day. He turned up as agreed, accompanied by six boys from his village to act as carriers. He took two bird boxes, with tobacco, salt and red calico to pay for birds and food. He would first visit Epa, a village in the foothills, southeast of Kubuna. If he had no luck there, he would recross the main track and go to Lapeka, to the north. Each boy was to receive a minimum of five shillings, with ten for Opu. If they were successful, we might do better by them.

The week following the departure of Opu Kaki was a quiet one for us. We worked hard on our birds and they were showing the results of good food, constant attention and quiet. Each day we received a few local birds—doves, fruit pigeons, pittas, glossy starlings—caught by small boys. Their older brothers and the young married men would not trouble. Any spare time I could find I spent in prowling through the bush, making the acquaintance of many birds quite new to me.

Old Guts came over from Eboa almost every day, to gossip with Koi and to learn if our stock of tobacco was still holding out. From him I learned that the dance was still in prospect, though he could not say when it would begin. When I pressed him on this point, he finally said that the delay was really the fault of Inawaibui, which had agreed to furnish smoked wallaby meat. The men of that village had gone to their hunting camp, which we had passed on our way down from the mountains. As soon as the supply was sufficient, the dance would begin.

I thought a good deal about this dance and wondered whether or not I should ever see it. While there appeared to be no doubt that it would take place eventually, it had been so long in the offing that there seemed no particular reason why it should begin before we had to leave to catch the *Morinda* on her next visit to Yule Island.

On the seventh day, my speculations on the dance were cut short by the return of Opu and his party. They were so obviously discouraged and downcast that we knew at once they had been unsuccessful. Inspection of their bird boxes showed one to be quite empty, the other occupied by a tiny fruit pigeon. This was all they had to show for a week's time and a fair amount of trade goods which, of course, they had entirely expended for food! Opu explained that at Epa "no boy stop"—he didn't know why. He had gone immediately to Lapeka, but while there were plenty of people there, they could get no birds because "him no dancey."

All of this sounded a bit queer to me and Ward was properly enraged. Opu, having turned policeman, had acquired the policeman's tricks. He had pitched up in the bush with his boys for a few days, hidden the trade where he could return for it, and come back to us with an infant dove and a cock-and-bull story. It had all turned out just as Ward had expected.

Regardless of the cause of the failure, it was a great disappointment to us. It seemed to me most likely that Opu, in spite of the fact that he was well known amongst neighboring people, had not been too well received and had not been able to get hunters to work for him. Ward and I had planned to sit tight and wait for the *Morinda* before moving down to Yule Island, in the meantime picking up such Mekeo birds as we could get. We had not considered another inland trip. But I was well rested, there was time for a quick trip and I was sure I could do better than Opu had done. With the help of young Okoa, and Aya, his chum, Ward could keep things going, as long as there was no move to be made.

I needed six boys to act as carriers and sent out a call for this number, to report in the morning. When the time came, it seemed to me that the total male population of Inawaia, Jesubaiboa and Eboa had turned out. If only they had been so eager when we had first arrived! Since there were plenty of boys, and plenty of food, I chose nine of the volunteers—I could have Koi this time, as Ward could get on without him. The whole thing seemed to all of us something in the nature of a lark, for I knew all of the boys well and they knew me. One of them was Okoa's father, and another the lad introduced as his "other father"—meaning, of course, his father's brother. I took these two because I knew they would carry well, intending to send them back, with two others, as soon as we were established.

We set out at dawn, and did the eight miles to Inawaibui in record time. Here old Guts, who had been travelling light, took on two large bunches of green bananas—I meant to have at least a start on bird food. The boys made the usual fuss about the "big water," but this time I took it a little easier and found that the support of the water was a great help in balancing, if given a chance. I crossed without much difficulty but poor old Guts, heavily loaded, slipped just as he was almost over. He had to be hauled out and found himself injured in some mysterious place, so that he was crocked for the rest of the day.

The rearrangement of loads, caused by the inability of Guts to carry, delayed the boys, and as we came into the high bush beyond the open foot-hills I was well ahead of them. As I passed along the side of a ridge, I met an ancient, hoary-faced yellow dog, which looked so exactly like a dingo that for an instant I was startled. He saw me as soon as I saw him and promptly took to the bush. I knew he would not be so far from home alone, and I went along expecting to meet a party returning from the Inawaibui hunting camp, which was not far away. But even though I had been forewarned, I was barely able to restrain a gasp of surprise when I topped the rise and came face to face with our old friend Pock-mark, evil genius of our march to Deva-deva. His features had the same cruel look, the same nasty leer. I had no fancy for meeting him in this out-of-the-way spot. But a second's hesitation showed him no more pleased than I, for he, too, was quite alone and equally unarmed. So I advanced boldly, looking as stern as possible. He meant, at first, to hold his ground but at the last moment stepped aside into the bush. I passed him with a noncommittal "Ah!" which drew no reply, for there seems to be no common word of greeting used by these people. It was an incident of no importance, of course, but it bucked me up considerably. I felt that if I could cow a person so obviously unpleasant as Pock-mark, I must be fairly hardened in the ways of New Guinea.

A quarter of a mile farther on, I came to the hunting camp. When we had passed it before, there had been nothing to see beyond a few tumble-down shelters. Now it was a scene of great activity, for every male in Inawaibui who could possibly be there was present. It was evidently something of an outing. Roofs set on high poles had been re-thatched, with rough sleeping platforms built close under the eaves. Old men set about, smoking their *bau-baus*. Small boys scampered and shouted. There were no women—Koi told me afterward that they came up daily to bring food but never remained for long.

The camp was set back a little from the track, and as a sprinkle of rain was falling, I stepped over to wait under shelter for the boys. A man I had never seen before invited me onto the platform of a hut, while another brought me a luscious and welcome slice of pineapple. I was surprised to find that my host was the owner of an old trade shotgun, and when I showed my interest he produced his license, which seemed to be in due order. By means of pantomime, he explained that while the gun was all right, he unfortunately had no shells. He should have got together with the Deva-deva policeman.

As I ate my pineapple, a party of six or eight young men, accompanied by a troop of well-winded dogs, came into the camp. Wound over long poles, they carried their heavy wallaby nets. But two, instead of nets, bore three large wallabies. These were of a species I did not know. In fact, while I suppose they have been described, I have not yet been able to identify them. They were at least as large as the agile wallaby found farther to the east, but unlike that almost uniformly tawny animal, they were distinctly dark gray, with white bellies, feet and tail tips.

No surprise was evinced at the arrival of this catch. I took it they had had good hunting, for spread on rows of sticks well above numerous smouldering fires was a considerable amount of quartered wallaby meat. When it had been thoroughly smoked, it would be wrapped in bark and laid away for the feast.

To pass the time away, I asked how they got them. They explained quite clearly, by pantomime and an occasional Motu word, that the wallabies were abundant in the grass of the open hills nearby. They set their long nets in suitable places, and with the help of their dogs drove the animals into them. Here they were speared by huntsmen posted at intervals.

Half an hour must have passed before the boys came along, but although rain was still falling, my shouts were in vain. They would not even look at the camp but filed silently by. Only Koi, obviously reluctant, came over. Speaking directly to me, with no word for my hosts, he said if we were to make Kubuna before night, we must go. I saw something was in the wind but in order not to leave too abruptly, I told him to get me some bananas.

When these had been produced, he was for going at once and I caused him some embarrassment by making him pay for my fruit with the trade tobacco he carried in his shoulder bag for just such emergencies. When we finally left, there was a distinct feeling of restraint on both sides.

As soon as we were out of hearing, I asked Koi for an explanation. As I had suspected, the immediate cause of the difficulty was the impending dance. Almost from the beginning, I had known that all was not well between the four villages I knew best. Inawaia and Jesubaiboa stood against Eboa and Inawaibui. Now Eboa was inviting Inawaibui and eight other villages to its dance. But Inawaia and Jesubaiboa would not be represented among the guests. The defection of our Inawaibui boys, with the exception of Maino and the Wise Boy, at Deva-deva, and the refusal of most of the others to join them, had added fuel to the fire. Koi explained that it was very bad form even to pass by a hunting party engaged in securing meat for a dance to which my boys were not invited. I had committed a grave breach of etiquette by stopping.

The boys must have been very frightened of the consequences, for Koi and I did not overtake them until we found them having a spell well up the main track toward Kubuna. Old Guts was still on the sick list, and the long march, with the extra load, had the others well stretched. However, there was no place to camp short of Kubuna and we kept on, arriving about four in the afternoon.

The rest-house was still impregnable but I did not trouble about that. Koi spread my blanket in a corner of the boys' house and piled the food and trade beside it, with my swag bag. This made the corner my own and I knew no one would go near it.

CHAPTER IX

HIDDEN VILLAGE

That evening at Kubuna, while I was having a cup of tea and the boys were boiling their rice, we received a visit from two men, old friends of Koi, who lived somewhere toward Lapeka. One of them carried a small, under-ripe pineapple, for which he asked a shilling. Koi, who now felt himself more than usually responsible, bitterly resented this and made himself rather ridiculous by offering to fight, white-man fashion. The pineapple dealer could make nothing of this and only grinned foolishly. I managed to avert hostilities, and when Koi had calmed down, he bought the fruit for a betel nut.

To the click of bone spatulæ in hollow lime pots, we acquired much information concerning local conditions. Opu's report as to Epa had been quite correct. An outbreak of some mysterious illness had caused several deaths and the survivors had deserted the place, splitting into small groups. When we left Inawaia, we had no definite destination, but thought we might investigate the remnants of Madiu. Our visitors squashed this altogether, saying that the former inhabitants of that village were now so scattered that we should find no food and no shelter. There was, they said, a small village near Fofofofo. It was hard to find, but if we could locate it, it was our only hope.

The next morning, to my surprise, the boys all complained of being stiff and sore. Once on the track, they moved slowly, and when we reached Dieni, had had enough of it for the day. I was feeling the climb a bit myself, and disdaining the rest-house, dozed through the afternoon's shower in a corner of the boys' shelter.

The rest was good for all of us and we covered the next day's short march to Fofofofo in no time at all. There is a very bad stretch of sticky mire here, and as we were picking our way through it we heard the dull thuds of an ax from somewhere ahead. We quickened our pace, and beside a little stream came upon a middle-aged man and a small boy. They had just finished felling a tree, to get bark for making rope. I was well ahead of the main party, with only Okoa's two fathers as companions. They tried to engage the strangers in conversation but could make nothing whatever of the Kuni tongue, so that we got nowhere. Koi finally arrived, and quickly took the situation in hand.

The wood chopper's name was Oli; he lived in a little village called Kekefi, behind the high ridge at our left. There was plenty of food and "plenty bird stop." He would be honored if we would go there. This, then, was the village to which Koi's friends at Kubuna had referred. We had been lucky enough to stumble on it.

Oli led us along the track until we came to a huge tree which had fallen at an angle against the mountainside. Climbing upon this, Oli walked along it for twenty feet, then dropped down into the bush. When I followed, I found here a faint path, perfectly hidden from the track. Hand over hand, feet gripping every scanty hold, we went straight up the steep side of the ridge, then half way down the other side. The forest was so dense we never could have found our way without Oli. At last, we came to an open, grassy knob, and beyond it, on a smaller and sharper projection, was the village. Oli shouted across. There was an immediate scurrying of dusky forms.

It was a good way around but at last we climbed a barricade of great logs and dropped into the village. It was utterly different from anything I had seen before. Birds or no birds, at least I was to know Kuni people in their own homes.

The spur was narrow and very sharply cut; its sides dropped sheer into the valley of the Angabunga or Aduella, far below. It was a lovely site. Straight across from us was Virjus Dome; the Needles stood sharply defined; beyond them the endless ranges, with the distant peak of Mount Yule towering above them all. A wild setting for wild people; they seemed to fit into it perfectly.

There were only four houses in the village, two set end to end, along each side of the spur, with about fifteen feet of hard-trodden earth between them. Three of the houses were perhaps twelve feet long by six high, the Pandanus-leaf thatching of the peaked roofs extending to the ground. On the side toward the central space they were set firmly on the earth; their outer walls projected into space and were supported by poles from below. Rough floors of poles were laid at ground level, so that the sharply dropping sides of the spur left a space beneath them. Here the pigs slept, entering from below.

The fourth house was a tiny *dubu*, built in a totally different style, set up about three feet on piles, the walls made of slabs of bark, the roof well thatched with Pandanus leaves. It was about nine feet long by six wide, five feet from floor to ridge pole, and three and one-half at the eaves. It didn't look very promising, but Koi said we were to sleep there.

At the far end of the village, hanging over the very point of the spur, was a high, partly roofed sleeping-platform, intended for the use of guests. Evidently there had been no pressing need for it, as it had never been finished. Here the boys made themselves at home, immediately going into a shivering huddle beneath their blankets. I tried to get them to set about completing the structure, but they said they were too cold, tired, and hungry to work. I knew one night there would change their tune, so did not press them. Instead, I measured out a small allowance of rice, for a special treat, as I meant to send back the four extra men and did not want to risk losing the others.

While the rice was being reduced to the usual pulp in a kerosene tin, Oli's brother, the real head of the little group, arrived. He was a very black and very hairy little chap, named Maio. Koi explained to him the purpose of our coming. This was no news to him, for he had known when we were at Deva-deva, and from the security of the bush had watched as we passed up and down the track.

The *dubu* had been occupied by three young men. Two of these, unmarried, were absent on a hunt for wives and never appeared. The third, who was named Carolo, was a widower, so terribly afflicted with double cataract that he was all but blind. Under the orders of Maio, Carolo began to carry the more valuable property from the *dubu* into the neighboring house of Oli. When this clearance had been completed, Koi and I moved in.

The *dubu's* only source of light, of course, was the entrance hole. When our eyes had become accustomed to the change from glaring sunshine to the gloom within, we found that slabs of bark, about two feet wide, ran around three sides of the floor. Extending from the fourth wall down the remaining space was a strip of earth, for the little cooking fires. Hanging from the ridge-pole were three or four of the small wooden ceremonial drums used by the Kuni people, coils of heavy bark rope of excellent quality, strong nets for pig and wallaby, amazingly delicate ones for birds. Several crude spears and a stone-headed war club were thrust between the rafters. The entire interior and all its contents were blackened by soot from the fires. Perhaps this accounted for the complete absence of the small vermin that might have been expected to swarm there.

The rice had been consumed by now and the extra boys were ready to leave, taking enough with them to last the trip. They were Okoa's fathers and two other older men, who I had thought might not be congenial with the younger ones I had chosen to stay. The extra dole of rice had served its purpose, for when the four left, there were no sighs of regret from those who remained behind.

Maio set out, early in the afternoon, to spread the news that we had come for birds. Oli and Carolo sat about, mending their bird nets. Oli had to twist new twine for his. He had prepared a pile of shredded bark, cut into lengths of about a foot. Taking five or six of these fibres at a time, he rolled them on his thigh with a twisting motion, producing a short length of twine of surprising uniformity. He left an inch or so free at the end, into which he inserted the next lot. In this way, he soon had a considerable footage, which he wound into a ball. Twine like Oli's is very strong—I never could break it with my hands.

Oli's bird net was about ten feet long by four wide, the mesh a little more than an inch. It was provided with a draw string at each end, which pulled the bottom toward the top, making a bag. For some reason, Oli felt the net should be a foot longer, and this he proceeded to weave on. He did this by forming the meshes over a flat stick, drawing the twine through with a crude bobbin and knotting it, exactly as I used to weave nets in my boyhood.

Oli said there were plenty of birds, and although they were not dancing, he would surely catch them if he could find what Koi translated as "flowers." He meant the fruit of the Pandanus on which the birds had been feeding at Deva-deva. They were nearly finished and scarce, but Oli thought he could find some. I hoped he was right.

Carolo, Koi and I slept that night in the little *dubu*, Carolo and I on the strip of bark at either side of the hearth, Koi in a tiny hammock lent him by one of Okoa's fathers. I was comfortable enough, except that I constantly awoke to find myself in the ashes. Each time this happened, I heard Koi moaning, sighing and shifting about, so that I knew all was not well with him. I learned the reason in the morning: the large, hard knots of the hammock had bitten so deeply into his bare skin that he carried the marks for hours. He was glad to accept my offer to exchange beds, and after that I slept in the hammock, my clothes on for warmth and protection, my feet on the floor. One night of our tossing was enough for Carolo, who thereafter slept in a shelter in his garden.

We settled down now to several days of waiting. For fear that birds might arrive and require my attention, I could not leave for long. This was irksome, of course, but it did give me an opportunity to become thoroughly familiar with the life of the village.

Kekefi was the typical one-clan community of the mountains, Maio being the undisputed chief. The relationships within the group were a little difficult to discover but I finally placed them all. Next door to our *dubu* lived Oli, his wife, a daughter of about fourteen and two younger children. One of the houses across from us was occupied by Maio and his wife, two children of perhaps four and six, and a babe in arms.

The house adjoining theirs was far more complex. Its owner was a feeble ancient, with scarcely strength to move about and further encumbered by a withered leg. He was the father of Maio and Oli. With him dwelt a woman, young, attractive and childless. It was some time before I could fully understand her status. She was the sister of Maio's wife and had been married to a man of Madiu. The husband had had the misfortune to lose a leg in an accident, and the wife had promptly returned to her village. She had charge of two little girls, the offspring of a third sister, the dead wife of the unfortunate Carolo.

This young woman, who considered herself unattached, naturally was a person of much interest to the Mekeo boys. But they confined themselves to casting sheep's eyes, not daring to go so far as to look at her openly. She shared a garden with Carolo and went to work in it each morning, accompanied by the daughter of Oli. Unlike the other women, she always dressed in all her finery before appearing outside her house, even when leaving for her garden. This included a beautiful crescent-shaped breast ornament of pearl shell, imported from the distant coast and known as *maili;* also a tremendous necklace and heavy ear ornaments, of the precious dogs' teeth. Contrary to the usual custom, she wore none in her hair. Her arms above the elbows and her legs below the knees were entirely covered with woven armlets or *gaunas;* about her waist was a broad girdle of twisted, brownish vines. Her perineal band of bark-cloth was more elaborate than any I had seen before, and hung down behind in a long tail, such as is affected by Mekeo boys when in full dress. Each morning she painted her face bright red and her forehead yellow.

This woman was curiously Mongolian in appearance: her skin was distinctly yellowish, her dark eyes were sharply slanted and her face was very broad, with high cheek bones. Maio's eyes were pitched in the same way but his skin was almost black.

The children were shy at first but soon overcame their timidity. One of Carolo's little daughters used to come to me often, as I sat before the *dubu,* bringing in her arms three yellow puppies, crawling with fleas. There was a game between us concerning the names of these puppies. Two were Maiva and Minia; simple enough. But the third was called Dubuna, and my part of the game was to mispronounce this as Kubuna. Several times each day I had to be corrected, amid great hilarity, in which the other children often joined.

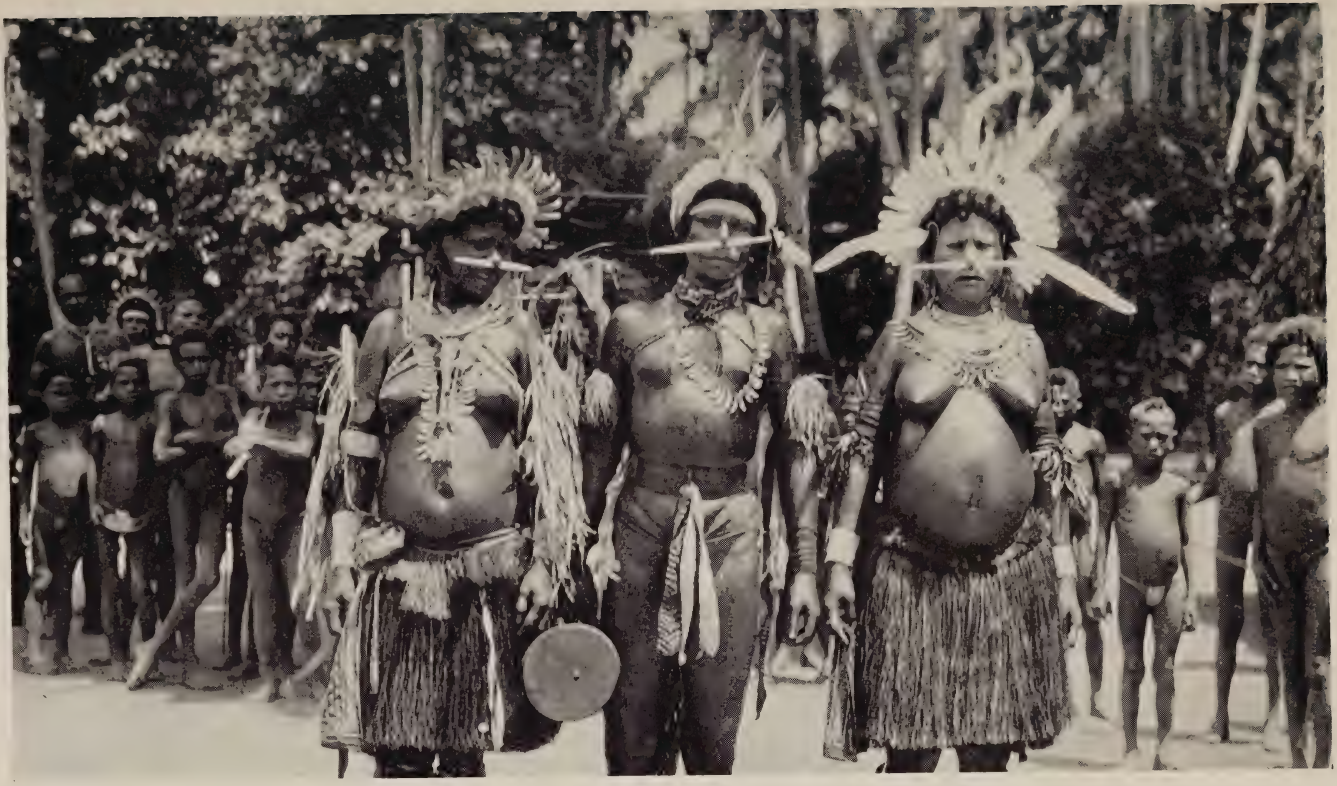
They were strange and wistful mites, these children, beautiful as all brown babies are. While I had no doubt that they were perfectly suited to the environment into which they had been born, I often wondered what education and training would have done for them. I felt this most strongly one rainy afternoon, when two naked tots, a boy and a girl, sat silently for an hour in the middle of the village street, wrapped in a piece of ragged sacking, their arms about each other's waists, gazing at the mist-covered mountains across the valley.

The shower ceased just before dark and the upper clouds lifted, revealing a scene of the most extraordinary beauty. The great valley below was a solid mass of white mist, with the clear-cut sides of the Dome rising above them, delicate wisps of cloud drifting across its face. The foliage of the nearby forest was brilliant with every shade of green, the leaves washed bright and clean. Across the deep, narrow gulley at one side of the spur, not more than a hundred yards away, a cock Count Raggi's bird of paradise, in full color, worked his way, jay-fashion, upward through the bare branches of a tall dead tree. The bird reached the very tip and remained there for at least five minutes, preening his lovely plumage, occasionally flapping his wings and calling. Suddenly, a great white cockatoo soared outward, screaming, from the ridge above, and the bird of paradise, startled, dove headlong into the safety of the forest.

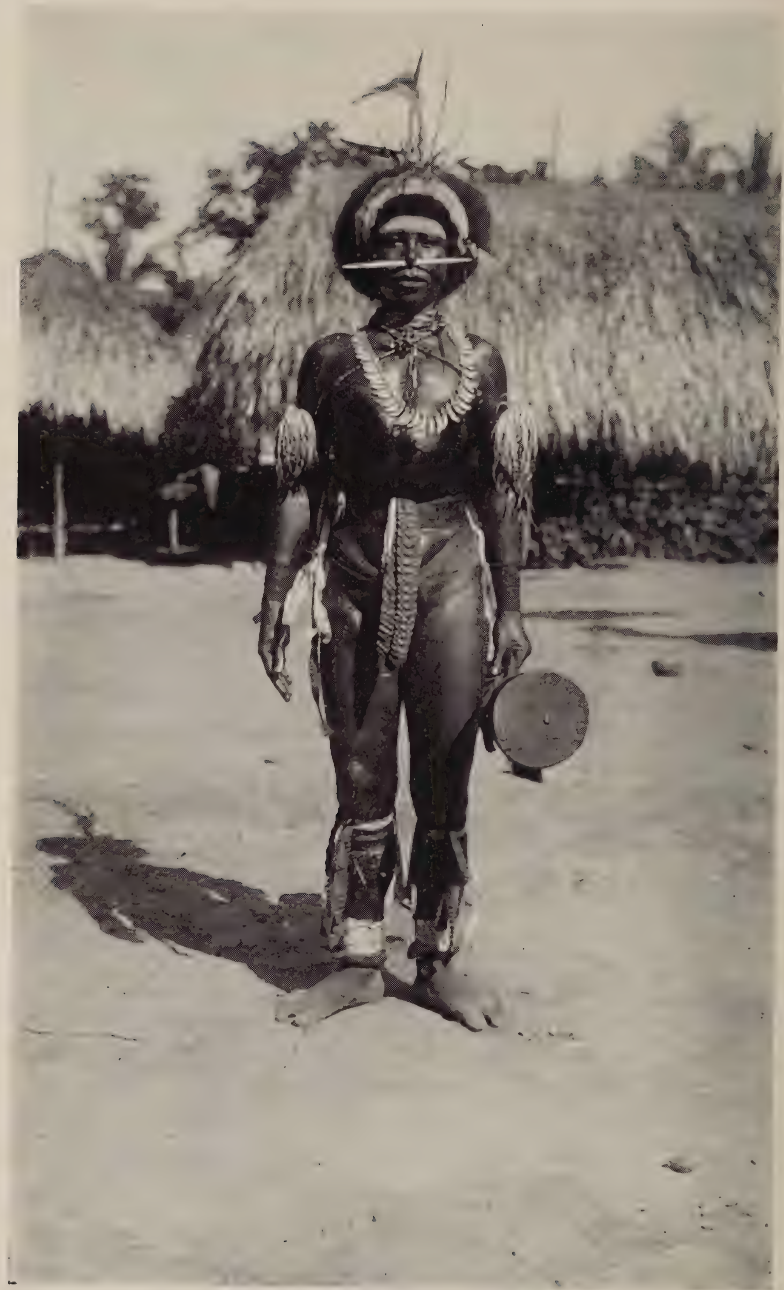
The clearing of the rain clouds continued and the sun had hardly set before the moon rose, round and full. The experience of moonlight in the mountains was new to me. It must have been a special occasion for the people of Kekefi, also, for they sat out of doors far past the usual hour. The evenings were always cool, for the elevation was 2,350 feet. Invariably, after supper had been cooked and eaten indoors, each family made a little fire outside and sat about whispering for an hour or so, each group keeping to itself. But the moonlight must have cast its spell upon them, for they deserted their fires and sat huddled together in the street until well after ten o'clock.

The light had something of the eery effect of that brief interval during an eclipse of the sun. Close at hand we could see the trees of the forest quite clearly; the mountains across the valley were only less distinct than they were during the day. The bare granite patches on the sides of Virjus Dome shone white against the darker jungle that surrounded them. At the base of the Dome an irregular clearing marked the location of a village of the Boboi people, known as Laifa; now a bright light shone there, undimmed by the moon's pale efforts. One pictures primitive people as devoid of finer feeling, thinking only of their bellies and a warm place to sleep. But I am sure these simple folk were deeply moved by the mysterious grandeur of that night.

Each evening, when the women came from their gardens, they brought us a small supply of potatoes and sugar cane, with occasionally a bunch of the little mountain bananas. But they could not spare an amount sufficient to feed us all, so had to get help from their



BRIDAL PARTY IN DANCE COSTUME.



MEKEO BOY IN DANCE COSTUME.

friends at Fofofofo, deep in the bush to the south of the main track. These women used to come up to us almost daily, to exchange nets of potatoes for salt, cloth and tobacco, and to gossip with the local women.

One of these ladies was a person of consequence, always treated with great respect by the others. One day she brought with her a girl of fifteen or so, evidently her daughter. After the usual barter, conducted by Koi, the two sat down on the ground and the mother began to rearrange the dogs' teeth with which the girl's head was heavily encrusted. I had often wondered how these were fastened and watched the process covertly.

The girl's hair was perhaps three inches long, braided into dozens of little pig-tails. One by one, these were undone, and the dogs' teeth removed. Each little clump of hair was then tightly twisted, and run through two or three perforated teeth. An inch of hair projected beyond the last tooth and into this fine, strong thread was braided, firmly knotted and the ends sawed off with a huge trade knife. The job required over two hours to complete but I should think the portion of the family fortune assigned to the daughter would be fairly safe from loss.

Beside her daughter, this woman had another dependant, even more exacting. Each day, as she seated herself to chat, she drew from the small shoulder net that held her lime-pot and pipe, a tiny, striped pig. It was very young and moved feebly. She would place it to her breast, nurse it calmly, then put it on the ground, to wander within reach of her restraining hand.

One day, as I sat before the house, wishing for something to happen, I noticed that Carolo had brought forth his treasure chest from Oli's house and was exhibiting the contents to Koi. Every native who owns anything of value keeps it in a box, usually made of camphor wood, imported, by subtle channels of trade, from the coast. I was very curious to know what Carolo had in his box and drew closer cautiously, for fear he might close it. He knew quite well that I was watching but pretended not to see me. One by one, he showed the dazzled Koi a large *maili* of exquisite pearl shell, and two smaller ones; shell armlets; strings of dog teeth and human teeth; cowrie shells in numbers. Two beautifully tapered white nose rods, about six inches long, with two narrow black rings near each end, made me forget my caution and ask to buy them, but Carolo quickly put them back. I afterward saw similar ornaments in Mekeo made of shell, but Koi said these were made of stone and came from the Inamaka Valley, which lies to the southwest. They did look to me like clear, polished granite but perhaps Koi was mistaken.

There was a small tin containing four copper pennies, evidently highly valued, a piece of green soap and a box of Searchlight matches, its contents intact. The next prize was an ancient stone, roughly fashioned into a beater for making bark cloth. Carolo said his father had given this to him, saying he must never part with it. But it was the only article in his box that he would allow me to touch, and finally he let me keep it in exchange for a large trade knife.

Carolo now brought forth his choicest possession, which he had held back to the last: two tiny nets, three inches long and an inch thick, furnished with long tie-strings. Inside, I could see small greenish stones, bits of white shell, seeds, dried leaves and twigs. Koi became wildly excited; questions and answers flew between the two boys. An inch of stick protruded from one of the nets; this Carolo broke off and gave to Koi, who received it with every evidence of great joy. When I asked *"Dahaka?"*

("What is it?") Koi launched into a long explanation:

"Boy he go dancey, he put him here (one in each armpit). *Kekeni* (girl), she like him too much. *Kekeni* she dancey, she no see him. Bimeby she go home, no sleepy good. Next day, she go boy, she say she want melly (marry); she like him too much."

In plainer English, love charms. A man wears them at a dance, and the woman of his fancy, unaware of their hidden presence, inevitably succumbs to their magic power. Carolo hoped there would be a dance in the neighborhood soon, for he needed a new wife to mother his two little daughters, to whom he was deeply attached.

Koi had complete confidence in Carolo's ultimate success, for he had secured his own wifey, a wonderful gardener and the mother of four healthy boys, by means of a love charm of similar nature. I did not press him as to what use he meant to make of the potent twig Carolo had given him. I knew he was not planning on a second wife, because while the men of Mekeo once rejoiced in two or more, the practice is now frowned upon by the Mission.

When Carolo had repacked his box and put it away, he went into the *dubu* and brought forth some flat packages wrapped in bark, which I had noticed tucked into the rafter poles. He unfastened these and disclosed them as the containers of the feather ornaments from which he would make the great head-dress used at important dances. I took it that the acrid smoke of the fires protected them from destruction by insects. There were countless bunches of the red plumes of Count Raggi's bird of paradise, hair-like feathers from the cassowary, wings, tails and crests of the white cockatoo, the red tail feathers of lories, golden crests of the gardener bower-bird, which he must have secured by trade from higher in the mountains. These feathers are highly valued and are handed down from father to son, no doubt until they are worn out. Each generation adds to the collection, which forms a considerable part of the family wealth.

Oli came into the village one day carrying a bundle of green-leaved plants, which he hung on a stump to dry. I went over to investigate and was much interested to find that they were small tobacco plants, the whole about two feet long, the individual leaves about nine inches in length by two or three wide. The literature of New Guinea teems with tales of an unknown native tobacco plant, cultivated by the people of the mountains. I was sure I had made a discovery and called Koi into consultation. He confirmed my identification, adding that Mekeo had obtained seeds of this mountain *kuku* and that it had done very well in the lowlands, producing plants six feet tall. He may have been quite right, but I never saw any tobacco grown in Mekeo, perhaps because the trade variety is obtainable and much preferred.

Finding a small bunch of withered blossoms, I broke them off, wrapped them up in a bit of bark, dropped them into my swag bag and forgot about them. After my return to New York, I came across the little package and sent it to our Plant Nursery, in the hope the tiny seeds might be fertile. Late in the summer, I received an urgent request from the gardener to come over. When I went, I found sixteen beautiful, pink-blossomed plants, the tallest measuring fifty-eight inches; the largest leaf we could find was sixteen and one-half inches long by six and one-half wide. I could hardly believe that these giants were the progeny of the delicate plants of Kekefi, but with Koi's statement in mind, I sent one of them to the New York Botanical Gardens, firm in the belief that the mysterious native tobacco of New Guinea had at last come to light.

This plant was forwarded to Professor Setchell of the University of California, who, as an expert in the species of tobacco, had no difficulty in identifying it as *Nicotiana tabacum angustifolium*, a primitive type of unquestioned American origin! In a recent paper* Doctor E. D. Merrill, after an examination of the material, confirms the determination. He further suggests that American tobacco may have been introduced into New Guinea, from the Portuguese colony on Amboina, early in the fifteen hundreds, or by the Spaniards, who conducted wide trade operations from the Philippines later in the same century. The possibility still remains that a native plant may yet be discovered in the possession of the inhabitants of some of the great unexplored regions of this great island. But the evidence now available indicates that New Guinea *kuku* had its origin in America.

One night on the half-finished sleeping-platform was enough to convince the boys of the necessity of completing the structure. On the side of the mountain, near the base of the spur, they felled a huge, smooth-barked tree, selected for them by Maio. This tree was quite three feet through at the butt. They ringed the bark at six-foot intervals, and by means of wedges peeled it off in great slabs. With these, they covered the sides and the roof, finishing off the latter with Pandanus leaves.

Snugly housed and with plenty of rice and potatoes, they were content for a day or two, but then the time began to drag. The men of the village had brought them coils of thin, brown fibre, receiving in exchange small gifts of tobacco and betel. They began, indifferently at first, to weave these into plaits an inch wide for use as arm or leg bands, known as *gaunas*. The material used for

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*"Tobacco in New Guinea," *American Anthropologist*, Vol. 32, No. 1, 1930, pp. 101–105.

these bands, in Mekeo, is wood-colored and usually is dyed black. But the brown fibre of the mountains, perhaps because of its color, is far more highly valued. As the first half-hearted efforts neared completion, the boys gradually acquired enthusiasm and the sleeping-platform was converted into a knitting-circle.

The demand for fibre now became so great that the local men decided it might be better for the weavers to secure their own material. Along the side of the mountain the vine that furnishes it grew in great profusion. It was within sight of the village and under the guidance of Maio and Oli the boys made several trips, returning draped in trailing loops of a smooth, olive-green vine, called *uva*. It is heart-shaped, in cross section, and through each side runs a tough strand of brown, easily separated from its rubbery coating.

Working with an industry I had never seen before, the boys soon accumulated a tremendous quantity of fibre, and returned to their feverish weaving. It had to be done, of course, while the material was still fresh, as it soon loses its pliability. One or two were provided with splinters of bamboo, with which to prod their way through difficulties, but most of them simply pushed the fibres through with their fingers and drew them tight.

I suppose the treasure in *gaunas* brought back to Mekeo from Kekefi is still the talk of the district, but of all the collection none could compare with Koi's. His arms and legs completely covered, he launched on a tremendous undertaking: a belt, the like of which could never have been seen before. Its width was that of eight ordinary armlets, and when it had been completed it clothed its maker regally. This intense application was so unlike Koi that I finally questioned him about it. He replied, gleefully, that his wifey was uncommonly fond of *gaunas*, that he was making them for her and that she would "like him too much." Something must have gone wrong, however, for until the day we left Mekeo, Koi still wore his ornaments himself.

It is more than just possible that Koi's sudden interest in the manufacture of *gaunas* had another cause than the laudable desire to please his wife. He really had a rather bad time at Kekefi, because for the first time I had him where he could not easily escape, and made his waking hours miserable by a constant fire of questions. Sometimes he was actually loquacious, launching into long accounts which usually ended in complete exhaustion of both vocabulary and temper. When he could endure the inquisition no longer, he would seek refuge by saying he didn't know or by applying himself more closely than ever to his weaving.

Amongst other things, I found out why he was so anxious to remain in the good graces of the Mission, by confining himself to a single wife. For Koi had once been policeman of Jesubaiboa and had acquired great merit through his industry in herding the children of the village to "tschool" at the Inawaia Mission. School is kept, if I remember rightly, from seven to nine, four mornings weekly. On these days, the policemen of Jesubaiboa and Eboa appear with their reluctant flocks, urging them on with shouts, backed up by long sticks. Koi had been good at this.

Unfortunately for him, a local policeman's duty includes keeping the village rest-house in repair. Koi, I gathered, had felt that if he were diligent in getting the children to school, the rest-house would somehow look after itself. Entirely without his knowledge, the evil thoughts of a jealous rival, working subtly, had finally weakened the supporting piles of the building. Consequently, when the district patrol officer had come through on a tour of inspection, and had pushed with undo vigor against a corner post, the house had crashed to the ground. The officer, strangely indifferent to the value of a really efficient policeman, had promptly deposed Master Koi. Opu Kaki had been appointed in his place and had proved totally lacking in zeal as a pupil chaser. Koi was certain that some day this deficiency would be punished and true merit receive its just reward.

I had been asking Koi the names of his four small sons: these were Aya Inape, Evi Inape, Pungi Inape and Inei Inape. Now I knew that Koi's full name was Koi Na-a—the first for his grandfather, the second for his father. In accordance with Mekeo custom, the second name of the children should have been Koi but they had been named for their mother, Inape Aya. Koi explained this irregularity by saying that while he knew the ill will of the contender for the policeman's job had carried great weight in the misfortune of the rest-house, some other bad influence must have been involved. After long reflection, he had decided that his name was "no good"; nothing else could account completely for his troubles. Not wishing to burden his children with such a curse, he had adopted the simple expedient of naming them for their mother.

One evening after supper, when the boys on their platform were roaring a song with more than ordinary enthusiasm, I asked Koi what they were singing. After some effort, he evolved the following, somewhat similar to the one he had given me at Deva-deva:

"Yesterday, two *manu taubada* come, boy go mountains;
To-day, one *manu taubada* come, boy go Kekefi;
To-morrow, boy go back Mekeo.
We glad!"

The first line of this song refers to our trip to Deva-deva, Ward and I being the two *manu taubada* (bird men). It is further necessary to explain that "yesterday" means "once" or "before"; "to-day" means "now" or "this time"; "to-morrow" means "soon." In the same manner, "every day" means "often."

After six days at Kekefi, I was fully convinced of the complete honesty of Opu Kaki in explaining the failure of his bird expedition. I should have the same tale for Ward on my own return. I had offered the generous price of a twenty-four-inch trade knife for the birds I wanted; the whole neighborhood had tried hard to win this rich reward. In my short walks along the mountainside I had seen plenty of Count Raggi's and magnificent birds of paradise. In the lower slopes of the mountains the local men said there were many rifle birds and king birds of paradise. But they were wandering through the bush, with no definite feeding stations. The fruit of the Pandanus was finished and the men had not been able to find a single one. They could not catch the birds.

Oli and Carolo had brought in several lovely little green fruit pigeons, with red crowns, called *punia*. These, with a couple of black and chestnut shrike-thrushes, were all the birds I had. A man from Madiu had brought down a magnificent bird of paradise, which he had caught by some chance. But either because of the advanced state of its molt, or perhaps an injury, I had been unable to save it; I had received no other birds of paradise. It was discouraging, of course, but I was cheered by the thought of our good fortune in reaching Deva-deva when we did. Two or three weeks later, we should have got no birds there.

There was nothing to do now but admit our defeat and depart. The next morning, having repaid the hospitality of Kekefi with small gifts, we made an early start, with Kubuna as our day's objective. We made excellent time to Dieni, but as I was going up a steep hill beyond the clearing, I had the bad luck to slip and strain a tendon in one knee. I hobbled painfully along, making very heavy going, with my eyes on the track, following it almost blindly. At the end of more than two hours of plodding, I looked up to find myself again at Dieni! In some way I could not understand, I had got turned completely around and had returned to my starting point. I was still four hours' steady march from Kubuna, not a pleasant prospect with a game leg. Koi had gone on with the boys and did not know of my mishap, so I could expect no help from him until he had become alarmed at my failure to catch up with them.

An hour later, as I toiled stiff-legged through the mud, I heard shouts and presently Koi dashed wild-eyed around a turn. Never had I seen him so excited. When he could catch his breath, he asked me what had happened. Ashamed to admit the truth, I told him I had returned to Dieni for my tobacco. He said nothing, but a little farther along, on a narrow hair-pin curve, he quietly pointed to my tracks, which showed I had taken the wrong end of a short cut across the gully and come out on the back track. I was properly caught, of course, but Koi said no more about it.

We found the boys waiting at the half-way point, so that I was able to get our little collection of birds fed and watered. After that, the long pull to Kubuna, which required so many stops that, when we finally arrived, Koi and I had been ten hours on the track. Even he was tired, perhaps more from excitement than anything else; he lay down and slept for half an hour, a thing I never had seen him do before while on the march.

That evening, there was a long discussion as to the route we should follow the next day. There was much talk of the difficulties of crossing the "big water"; another track, which ran by way of Lapeka, was shorter and better in every way than the one that ran past the Inawaibui hunting camp. I was suspicious of this shorter and better way, because if all they said of it were true, I should have heard of it before. Also, I was perfectly certain that the boys' wish to go by the Lapeka track was not due to dread of the "big water" but to fear of the hunting party from Inawaibui. I charged them with this and they calmly admitted it. I reminded them that my leg was *dika* and they assured me that the new track was flat as Mekeo. At last, they said that, if I insisted, they would gladly go the old way but they hoped I would not insist, as it would be so much harder for me. This disarmed me completely and I gave in at once; I didn't much like the thought of the "big water" with a bad leg. As it turned out, the Lapeka track was at least half again as long as the other and presented various obstacles which I should not have risked had I known of them. On the other hand, the country it crossed was most interesting, and had my knee been sound, I should have enjoyed this more than any other single day's march in New Guinea.

Koi, the blighter, knew well enough what we were in for and had us all up at four. While the boys were cooking and eating their rice, I had a billy of tea and a biscuit. I fed the birds by the light of the lantern, and at five, before the first gray of dawn, we were on the track. We followed it over the suspension bridge, which this time the lightly loaded boys were willing to cross and then made a sharp turn to the right on a faint foot-path. It was fairly level at first, but soon began running up and down a series of very sharp ridges, perhaps seven or eight hundred feet high. Some of these were clothed in forests of tremendous bamboos, the largest I ever saw, which arched over and closed above us.

After an hour of dragging my stiff leg up and down these ridges, we came to the first Lapeka, a village of ten or twelve houses. I say first, because the boys said there were five of these villages, all of which they called by the same name. The Lapeka people are intermediate, in many ways, between Mekeo and the mountain tribes, not only geographically but through continuous intermarriage. My own boys were known and welcome there, as Opu's party had been.

Two hours more and we were approaching the "second Lapeka," which we could see above us, on the top of an open, grassy knoll. The boys had eagerly rushed on ahead and Koi was urging me to quicken my snail's pace, when I heard the calls of Count Raggi's bird of paradise, close at hand. In spite of Koi's impatience, I insisted on having a look and finally made out the bird through the dense foliage. He was very near and I moved up the hill a little farther, where I could get a better view. What I saw there made up for all the painful peg-legging I had endured.

A tree about fifty feet tall grew on the side of the slope, and from my higher position on the hillside I could look directly into it. It was free of branches except at the top, where they broke out in a dense, green canopy. Beneath this shelter, on several bare, dead limbs, four cock Count Raggi's, in full color, were engaged in their courtship dance. Bodies held horizontal, wings spread, lovely red plumes arched and drooping in glorious cascades above their backs, they moved along the branches in short, stiff hops, picking at imaginary enemies. At intervals, each would become quiet for an instant, then, calling loudly, suddenly expand its plumes to their utmost and resume the dance. There was no sign of quarrelling. Each bird was intent on displaying its own beauty, on its own branch, without regard for the others.

I was thrilled to the marrow by this spectacle, for I had pictured it in my first vague thoughts of New Guinea. I had hoped to see it, until I had discovered that the dancing season was over. And now, after all, I had seen it! I could have watched the gorgeous creatures for hours but Koi, thinking of the miles ahead and indifferent to the antics of mere birds, became so insistent that I had to go on to quiet him. As I stumbled up the hill, I puzzled over the problem of how I had managed to see dancing birds when they weren't dancing!

As soon as we had deposited ourselves on a *dubu* platform in the village, I told Koi to ask a man who seemed to be in authority to explain the miracle. It was perfectly simple. The courtship season was finished, right enough. But the molt had not yet begun and the adult cocks were indulging in impromptu visits to their favorite trees. Practice dancing! No one could foretell when or where. "To-day he dancey here, to-morrow he dancey there." Just a bit of luck for me.

Another mile from the second Lapeka, we passed through the third, hardly more than a camp, of two or three houses. We were now approaching the northeastern boundaries of Mekeo, and as we descended from the ridges we came to a little clearing in the bush. In its centre was a low, rough platform, surrounded by the charred remains of small fires. The boys were having a spell here, as Koi and I came along, and I was glad enough to pitch down too. I learned that this spot was the meeting place of Lapeka and Mekeo people when fairs were held.

Soon after leaving the clearing, we came to a very large tree, with a pile of coconuts heaped in the space between two root buttresses. We all stood and looked; we could have done with some of those nuts. Koi said that they had been brought there from Mekeo; that a fair was about to take place. There was no one about, but it never occurred to any of us that we might help ourselves. The boys would not even approach within several feet. Those nuts were to be exchanged for the much-prized rope of Lapeka.

Not long after, as we were picking our way through the bush, we came suddenly face to face with four or five Inawaia women. At the moment, I happened to be at the head of the line, and as the women were bent almost double with heavy loads of trade articles, they did not see me until we had almost met. Terrified, they rushed for the bush, where they waited for me to pass. The last of the line was a young sister of Okoa, who knew me perfectly well, from bringing food to her brother. Pleased at seeing some one I recognized, I was on the point of giving her a word of greeting, when I caught a look of such complete horror on her face that I quickly changed my mind.

Once I had passed, the women came back into the track and exchanged a few words with the boys. "Mitta Ward" was all right; the birds, too, as far as they knew. The Eboa dance was now a certainty and would begin within the next few days. I might get to see it, after all.

Just as we came into the thin scrub of the flat Mekeo plain, I heard the weak, nasal call of a bird of paradise, close at hand, as though a Count Raggi's were whispering or had a bad cold. I exclaimed to Koi, "*Una-walla-walla!*" and he nodded agreement. I had not yet seen a king bird of paradise but I knew it could be nothing else. Presently I spied him, no larger than a thrush, his back and breast flaming scarlet, silvery white below. He was working close to the ground, apparently searching for insects, and so intent was he that, indifferent to our presence, he came into a low shrub, not ten feet away. I could plainly see the wonderfully developed middle tail feathers: two long, delicate wires, tipped with intricate circular rackets of glittering emerald.

Koi had told me that kings are sometimes found in the borders of Mekeo, though I had hardly expected the good fortune of seeing one there. But this gorgeous little bird, that meant so much to me, was nothing to Koi and he would not let me stop. At each of my frequent pauses, he had urged me on, saying, "You no go, us two fella come Inawaia to-morrow!" And now he said it again, this time so loudly that the bird of paradise was frightened away and there was nothing more to stop for. Anyway, I saw it, if not for long!

Within a hundred yards, we came out into saw grass, dry and shrivelled, under a scorching sun. After two miles of this, we were glad indeed to enter the shade of a grove of towering coconut palms, which sheltered the hunting camp of Inawaia. Another reason for this roundabout! This time I was all in favor of it, for when we arrived, the cool milk of young nuts was already waiting.

These hunting camps are rather curious. We were still miles from Inawaia but this territory was indisputably its property. The houses were far more pretentious than those of the Inawaibui camp and the site had the further advantage of being at a low level, where coconut palms will grow. Koi said that Jesubaiboa had no hunting ground of its own and was allowed the privilege of using Inawaia's. In the same way, Eboa made use of the Inawaibui camp. I took this as another instance of the scheme of alliance among the four villages.

In the open grass the track was good, and I left the camp feeling as though I really might get to Inawaia after all. But my spirits were soon dampened, for in spite of the boys' assurance that there was no water, we entered the top of the Bioto swamp. For two miles or more we waded through mud and water, from knee to waist high. I could not pull my injured knee high enough to clear the mire, and at each step had to lift it with my free hand. Huge water leeches swarmed, and when I could I balanced on one foot and picked them off.

At last, I came to the end of it and flopped down in the shallow mud, thoroughly done. Koi, who had left me to struggle alone, now came back and stood looking at me. His stock remark was on the end of his tongue but he thought better of it and said, instead, "*Taubada*, you tired?" Tired? My oath! I might have been unable to walk but I could roar and let go at him in such a rage that he must have thought me mad. He fled without a word, and a few minutes later, when there came the splash of footsteps, it was good old Guts, come to see me out of it. Koi would rather carry a load than take what he deserved for bringing me through such a place.

It wasn't so bad after that. We crossed deep, wide pools, walking upright on slender logs, a feat I should never have attempted had I been entirely myself. We passed through more saw-grass, with our arms over our eyes, which smarted from smoke. For there was fire in the grass—we could hear the crackle of it. I wondered how I should make out if we had to run for it. Fortunately, running was not necessary, for we came suddenly into a broad, open track, close by a village, nestling under tall palms and slender betels. Guts said this was Eboa, his home. When we reached the entrance, a boy came out with a freshly punctured coconut—Koi must have ordered this, as a peace offering. I dreaded passing through the village but thought of the boys after their long march down from Deva-deva. I pulled myself together and stalked down the back way, making as good a show as I could.

It was only a couple of miles from Eboa to Inawaia, and Ward met me half way. The boys had told him I was *dika* and he expected to see me in a sling. He was relieved to see me on my feet, if wobbly, and I don't think I ever was gladder to see any one.

CHAPTER X

ANXIOUS DAYS

Ward had had his hands full during my absence at Kekefi, but hard work and constant attention had kept the birds in excellent condition. He had even added to the collection a number of local species, including two black manucodes. These brought the total of our kinds of birds of paradise to nine. My little lot from Kekefi, which had come down in good shape, made a welcome addition, even though I had failed to get more birds of paradise.

On the day after my return, old Guts came over with the news that the Eboa dance was definitely set to begin in seven days. That would be on a Monday. Mr. Ducker, manager of Angabunga Plantation, had arranged to take us down to Yule Island in his launch on the following Wednesday. If everything went off perfectly, I ought to see at least the beginning of the dance. If the usual postponement occurred, then I should miss it, for Wednesday must see us on our way. There was a week to wait and it was a week filled chock-a-block with excitement.

An Inawaia girl, that very day, had been detected in the act of "walking out" with a young man from Eboa, of whom her father did not approve. He had sent the boy about his business and had given his daughter a sound beating. The boy from Eboa was a rather splendid person—not so tall as many Mekeo boys but muscled like a gladiator. Because of the feeling between the two villages, the customary negotiations concerning the marriage and the price of the girl had not been made. The young lady's father did not mean to part with her lightly. He had reared her in pleasant anticipation of the time when she would leave his home in exchange for great riches. These might take the form of a pig, or even two, in addition to necklaces of dogs' teeth, breast ornaments of pearl shell and other articles of value. He did not intend to be robbed.

The hum of conversation in the village that evening was suddenly interrupted by a series of wild yells, followed by the exodus of small, hurrying parties. The Eboa boy had met his lady at the edge of the bush, just after dark, and they had fled together.

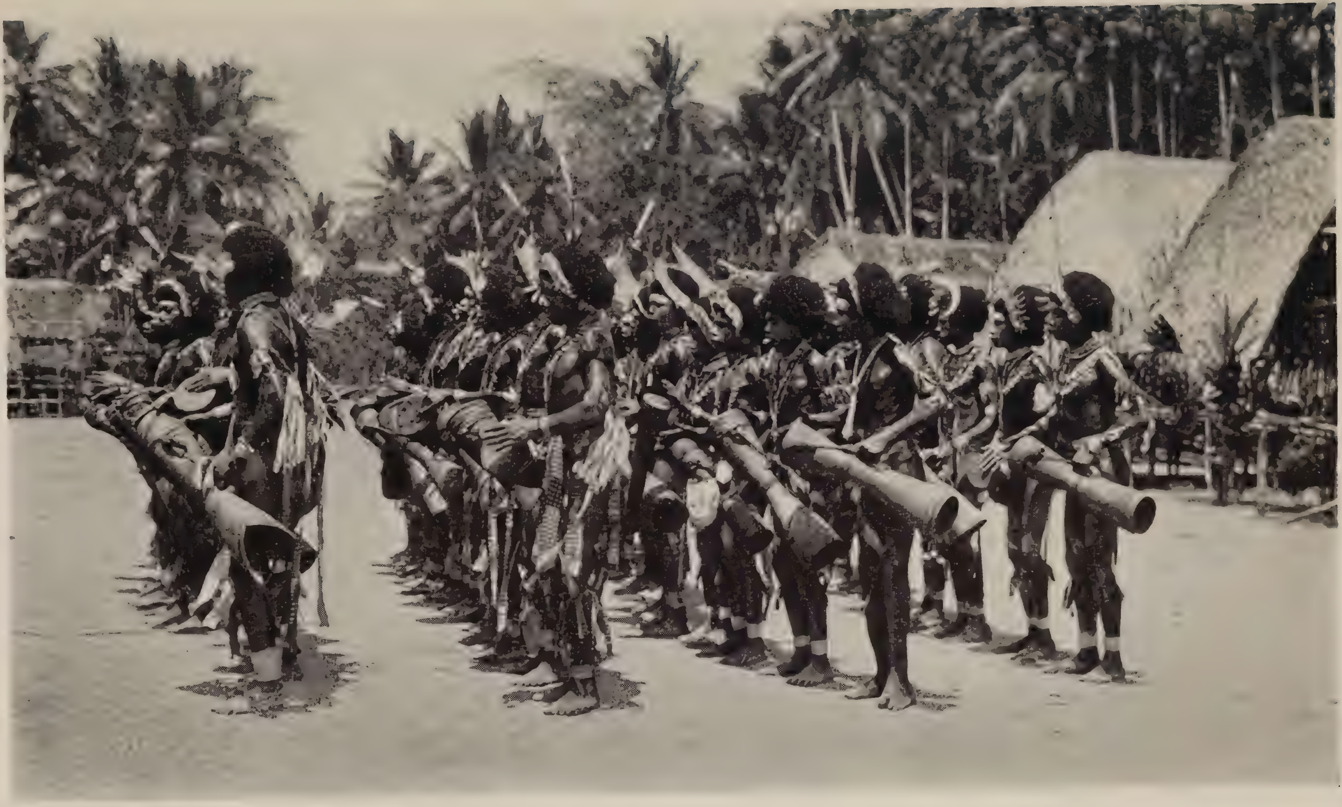
Late that night the father, dejected and discouraged, returned empty-handed from the pursuit. Hardly had he arrived when lights were seen coming up the track and presently the mother appeared, accompanied by a small party of women. They walked in single file and held aloft blazing torches of dried palm leaves. They had gone barely a hundred yards down the village street when the outraged father, roaring like a maddened bull, rushed forth to meet them. A glance showed that his precious daughter was still missing. Unable to restrain himself, he seized the torch from his wife's hand. A double arc of fire swept through the air and a shower of sparks flew up as the burning frond descended upon the shoulders of the delinquent mother. Again and again he struck her. Shouts and shrieks resounded through the village and the encircling bush.

This climax did not add unduly to the excitement of the village, for every one agreed that a beating was thoroughly deserved by a wife who had allowed her husband's most cherished possession to be stolen from beneath his very nose. In fact, it served her right. The general conclusion was that this affair was simply an example of the contempt in which Inawaia was held by Eboa. Evidently the latter village would stop at nothing to make little of its enemy.

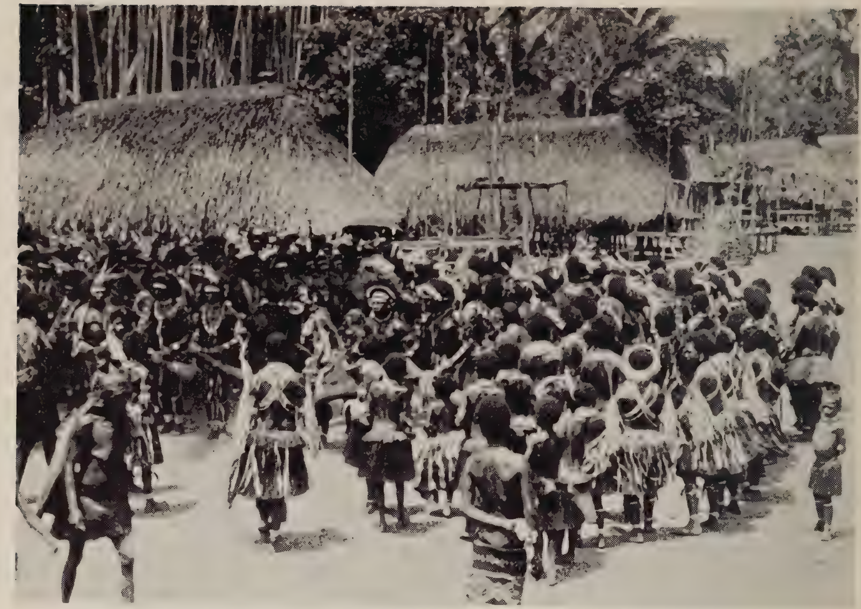
During the next few days, the village gossips kept us fully posted as to the whereabouts of the runaways. "To-day he go Rerai," or Waiacka, or Inawi, as the case might be. Every one in the village, except the disgruntled parents, seemed to know exactly where the elopers were, but for some reason the information was never divulged to them.

The excitement following this high-handed robbery had hardly subsided when Inawaia received another and more stunning blow. We had just covered our birds one evening and were sitting down to a leisurely meal of hard tack and tinned beef when we heard shouts outside. Koi burst in, exclaiming, "*Taubada! Gai-gai* he fight-um boy!" A boy had been bitten by a snake! We rushed out and were quickly guided to a nearby *dubu.* On the way we gathered that the boy—he was really a man and about thirty years old—had been one of a party hunting wallabies in the burning grass we had passed through two days before. He had been attacked by a snake, which no one but himself had seen, and had promptly collapsed. His friends had carried him back to the village, requiring, as nearly as I could estimate, about three hours for the journey.

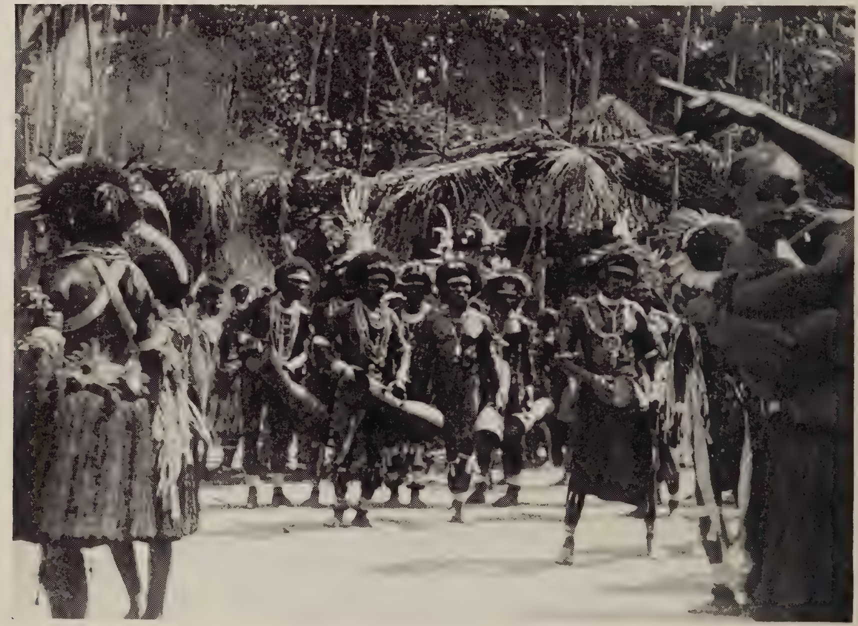
The *dubu* was a two-story affair, the entrance to the upper floor being reached by means of a rickety ladder. I pushed my way through a crowd of curious natives, crawled up to the narrow hole and squeezed myself through it. In the dim light I could make out the stricken boy, half reclining on the floor, supported by his mother. I was surprised, at first, to see her there, because for a woman to enter a *dubu* is an unheard-of violation of custom. Then I realized that her son, having been bitten by



NATIVE DANCE AT EBOA.



GAILY DRESSED WOMEN READY FOR SIGNAL TO JOIN DANCERS.



A PHASE OF THE DANCE.

a snake, already had the status of a dead man. No one would live in the house again and all restrictions were automatically removed.

Beside the mother, a dozen friends, both men and women, squatted about. All were howling dismally and assuring the boy that he was as good as dead. I put a quick stop to that—it was enough to frighten any one to death. But the victim himself was pathetically certain that it was true. I asked if he were in pain and some one in the crowd answered, "*Lasi, taubada!*" But if there was no pain in his body, there was deathly fear in his dull eyes. Tears coursed slowly down his cheeks.

I was desperately anxious to save this boy—not alone for the prestige it would give me. Before leaving New York, I had cabled to the Pasteur Institute, in Paris, for a supply of anti-snake-bite serum.* It had reached me in Australia and was now in our little store of medical supplies. I shouted down to Ward, who was outside, to hunt it out and send it back by Koi. It had come a long way and now I had need of it.

Koi was back like lightning and the little box was passed up to me. I attached the hypodermic needle to the tip of the vial, and injected the amber fluid into the boy's arm. I did my best to reassure him and warned his friends against resuming their howling. I wanted him to have all the chance there was.

Next morning at six o'clock, I found the boy practically normal in pulse, temperature and breathing. He was so sleepy that he could hardly keep his eyes open, but he still felt no pain or discomfort. His friends had been doing everything possible to keep him awake and I now urged them to let him sleep. I was certain that the serum had

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**Serum antivenimeux. Contre les morsures des serpents de l'Inde et de l'Egypte.*

saved his life and left, delighted. All morning I meant to visit the sick man again, but, feeling that all was well, kept putting it off for things that seemed more important. But about two o'clock I was startled by a chorus of wails. Instinctively I realized the cause and rushed down to the *dubu*. The boy was dead!

Logically, the explanation is easy enough. It is quite possible that the serum might not have been effective, for it was intended for use against the venom of the true cobras. The poisonous snakes of New Guinea are an offshoot of this group, so that the serum might not have been sufficiently specific. Moreover, the victim and his friends, in accordance with custom, had made no attempt to drain the wound or to tie off the circulation. Either of these points would satisfactorily explain the boy's death.

The people of Inawaia found explanation equally simple, though from a somewhat different point of view. To them, it was the work of sorcerers or *pouri-pouri* men. There is no real native religion in the Central Division. The nearest approach is a firm belief in spirits, usually malignant, and in sorcery. These beliefs are a tremendously powerful factor in the lives of the people. While sorcery is frowned upon by the Government and its practisers punished when detected, it is probable that *pouri-pouri* never will be entirely eradicated. Snakes are the special agents of *pouri-pouri* men. When a snake is sent to bite an enemy, that man dies.

Whether or not the snake is really a poisonous one is of no consequence to them; they are just as much frightened of a harmless tree python as they are of a venomous species. The boy had been bitten by a snake—some kind of snake—and he would die. Apparently, except for his lethargy, perfectly normal, yet slipping away, steadily, inexorably.

I should, I suppose, accept the arguments of my medical friends, pooh-pooh the superstitions of ignorant savages, and let it go at that. But, somehow, I haven't yet been able to do it.

They brought the dead boy down to the lower room of the *dubu* and laid him on the bare poles of the floor. They put bits of red cotton wool in his nostrils. The women sat about him, chanting monotonous dirges, throwing earth into their hair, rubbing it on their bodies. They stroked his thighs, his arms. Male relatives stalked up and down outside, adding their lamentations to the mournful chorus. At six o'clock that evening, a solemn procession carried the bark-wrapped body to the little burial place beyond the village, well fenced against the pigs.

I had some doubts concerning the people's attitude as a result of my failure to effect a cure. They were deeply stirred and might easily turn against us. But as it turned out, the whole affair was charged to the account of Eboa. In order to make their dance a success and to have something really worth while dancing for, they had got their chief *pouri-pouri* man to send the snake to kill the Inawaia boy. Even the medicine of the white man was not powerful enough to overcome black magic.

Inawaia was quiet that night. After the first wild outburst of grief, there was no audible mourning for the victim of Eboa's treachery. There was none of the usual shouting and argument, which often kept us awake for hours. Groups gathered about the fires and talked in low tones. Mysterious visitors, in small parties, passed in and out along the track, lighting their way with palm-leaf torches. The silence was ominous. Inawaia could endure no more.

A life for a life is the native law of New Guinea. Inawaia must have its revenge but was not quite certain as to just how this was to be accomplished. In the days before the Government imposed its curious ideas of justice, there would have been no question. War would have been declared and fought out with joy and promptness. But Inawaia knew only too well that any attempt to settle the affair in its own way would bring the hated police hurrying from Yule Island.

From their first warlike reaction, the people quickly changed to an attitude of fear. Koi said, "Boy him like fight, him too muchy fright!" Not frightened of Eboa but of themselves. They were afraid that they would be unable to restrain their own eagerness for battle and would get into difficulties with the Government.

The solution of their dilemma and a satisfactory settlement of the affair came suddenly and from an unexpected source. No one had considered the younger element of the village. Fear of the Government laid no restraining hand upon them. So it happened that, early one morning, as we were quietly working on our birds, there came the sound of rushing feet, mingled with shrill war cries. I looked behind me and shouted for Ward.

A battle of the most ferocious nature was being fought in our very dooryard. The small boys of Inawaia had attacked a reconnoitering party of the youth of Eboa. Each side was armed with heavy throwing sticks of green wood, about two feet long, sharply pointed at each end. Had the precision of the hurlers equalled their enthusiasm, the tragic climax of the battle would have come much sooner than it did. Battalions of little girls, their grass skirts aflutter, formed supply trains for the opposing forces. A boy of about six, grinning with pride, dashed up with a smoke-blackened bow and several arrows, which were quickly passed to the front rank. A flanking party, armed with these businesslike weapons, crept into the bush. Soon, blood-curdling shrieks told that an arrow had found its mark. The battle ended as quickly as it had begun. The combatants on either side melted away. The cries receded in the direction of Eboa.

Inawaia, if possible, was even more quiet than before. No one stirred in the street. Not until Koi, fairly bursting, had returned from the men's house next door did I get a detailed, if slightly exaggerated, account of what had happened.

The sportsman with the bow, hiding behind a tree, had fluked a bull's-eye on the person of a member of the Eboa army, shooting him through the heart. The victim, dying, had been borne to his village in the arms of his defeated comrades. The bowman, thoroughly frightened, had taken to the bush. There would be no dance in Eboa, because a village does not dance when one of its inhabitants has met death.

I passed the remainder of the day in disappointed dejection. Was I going to miss that dance after all? Next morning, unable to endure the suspense, I took Koi and went over to Eboa. The house of sorrow was quickly found and I climbed the ladder and entered. The injured lad was no more than fourteen and was still living with his family. He was surrounded by moaning relatives, making an almost exact replica of the previous mournful scene in Inawaia. An old woman, exhausted by her efforts, lay asleep across his legs. I stirred her up, in order to examine the boy. To my great relief, I found that while the arrow had inflicted a painful wound, it apparently had been deflected by a rib and had not entered the chest cavity. I dressed the wound and gave the patient a stick of trade tobacco, which he accepted rather sheepishly. He had been enjoying his own wake. When I left, I assured all present that he would speedily get well. I earnestly hoped I was right.

My visit to Eboa took place on a Saturday. My chances for seeing the dance hung by the thread of this boy's life. But on Monday old Guts turned up with the news that even the lad's family admitted his condition was greatly improved. The dance would begin that very night. The relief felt by Inawaia was as great as my own. The blood of Eboa had been drawn in fair fight, revenge was complete, and there were no unpleasant consequences to face.

I was delighted, of course, and hurried Ward through supper. As soon as he was finished, I dragged him off to Eboa—much against his will, for he affected a stern indifference to native affairs. It was black dark when we reached the village but the middle street was brightly lighted by the huge fires that blazed before every house. We were met, with some ceremony, by the faithful Guts, who led us to seats on the platform of the main *dubu*. Since we were guests, we must be fed, and our host brought us a cluster of small, thin bananas, of exquisite flavor. They must have been something special, for I had never seen that kind before. In turn, we passed out bits of trade tobacco and settled down to await events.

The streets and platforms were crowded with people. The village resounded with shouts and laughter. Great platforms had been erected and here, under the shelter of fresh palm leaves, were displayed quantities of sweet potatoes, taro, pineapples and bananas. In the places of honor were the bark-wrapped quarters of smoked wallaby, the contribution of Inawaibui's hunting camp.

The dance seemed about to begin but the hours dragged on with no sign of further activity. Even my enthusiasm began to wane. At ten o'clock, a late hour for us, we could hold out no longer and left, promising to return in the morning. We had not got half way to Inawaia when there came a deep-throated crash of drums: *boom-a-boom,*

boom-a-boom, boom-a-boom. The dance was on! They had only been waiting for us to leave. I wanted to go back but Ward restrained me. There would be all day to-morrow.

I could not sleep and in the first gray of dawn Ward and I were out and at work on the birds. I tried hard to focus my attention on the intricate food mixtures but finally Ward, in disgust, told me to clear out and leave it to him. Koi had appeared by now, and after a hasty cup of tea I asked him if he would like to go with me to Eboa. Emphatically, he would. Since neither Jesubaiboa nor Inawaia was invited, Koi, as a private citizen, could not attend. But as my escort he could do so without loss of dignity. He would not go, however, without primping. I had to wait impatiently while he teased out his fuzzy mop, put on a new *rami* of turkey-red calico, and begged some Colius leaves for his arm bands. Fortunately, he had happened to leave home wearing the marvelous belt he had woven at Kekefi.

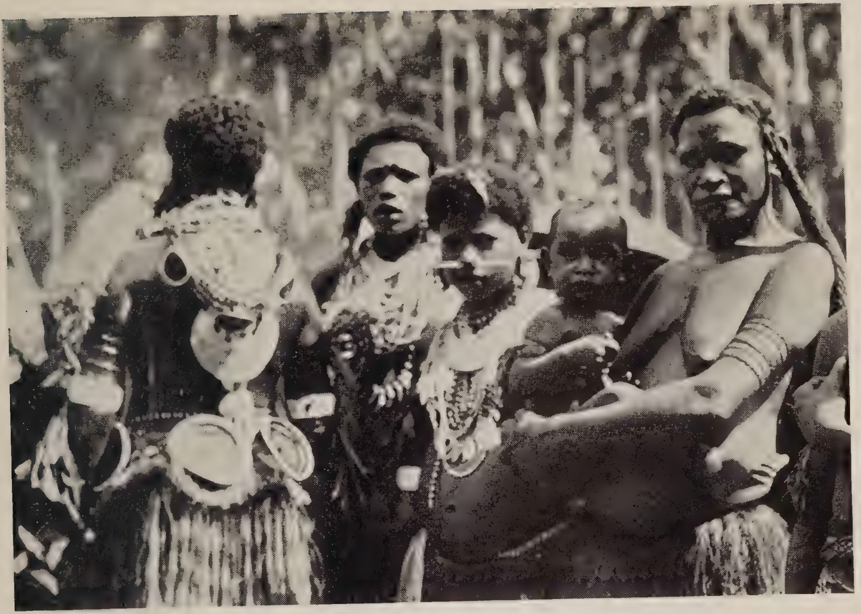
At last we were off for Eboa, loaded with cameras. All morning, when the light wind shifted in our direction, I had heard the stirring rhythm of the drums. As we neared the village the booming grew louder and I could hardly content myself with walking. I had waited so long to see this thing and to-morrow we should be gone! We hurried through the grove of tremendous palms that surrounds the village and burst out upon the central street. What I saw should be told to the sound of drums.

A column of nearly naked savages, their splendid bodies glistening in the sun, was advancing slowly down the street. Each man carried a tubular drum, about two feet long, under one arm, and with the stiffly extended fingers of his free hand beat a staccato rhythm that sent queer tingles down my spine. Their bodies inclined slightly forward from the hips, and their feet, barely clearing the ground, moved in tiny double steps that were in perfect time. Feather head-dresses, ranging from elaborate affairs four feet tall, composed of hundreds of bird skins, to more simple hair decorations of paradise plumes and white cock's tails, dipped gracefully as scores of heads bobbed in unison. Coconut oil and red pigment gleamed through festoons of dogs' teeth, breast and arm ornaments of pearl shell, and clusters of scented Colius and Croton leaves.

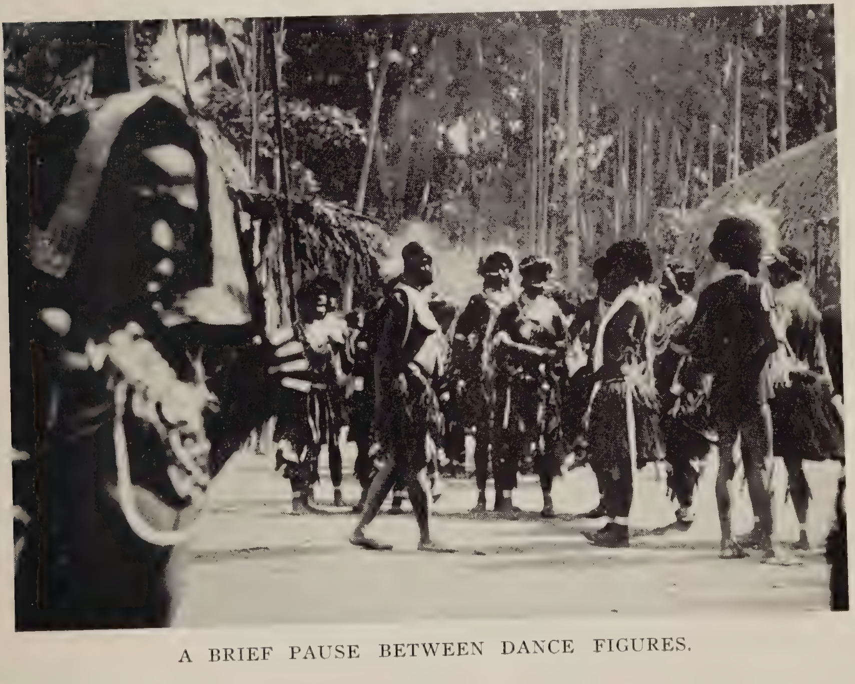
As I watched, spellbound, the column performed an intricate evolution, resulting in six parallel lines which faced each other, three a side. Apparently at a signal, the women participants now came forward from among the crowd of spectators. Arranging themselves at the ends of the lines, they fell easily into the rhythmic step, swinging their orange-and-black striped grass skirts with freedom and grace. Suddenly the opposing sides rushed toward each other, the men with their bodies bent almost double. The drums beat a mad tattoo, reached a sharp climax and stopped. The figure was ended.

The women now mingled with the crowd or gathered by themselves in small groups. The men remained at rest for a moment. Then a single drum began to boom, this time a different beat. Instantly the others took it up and the dance was on again.

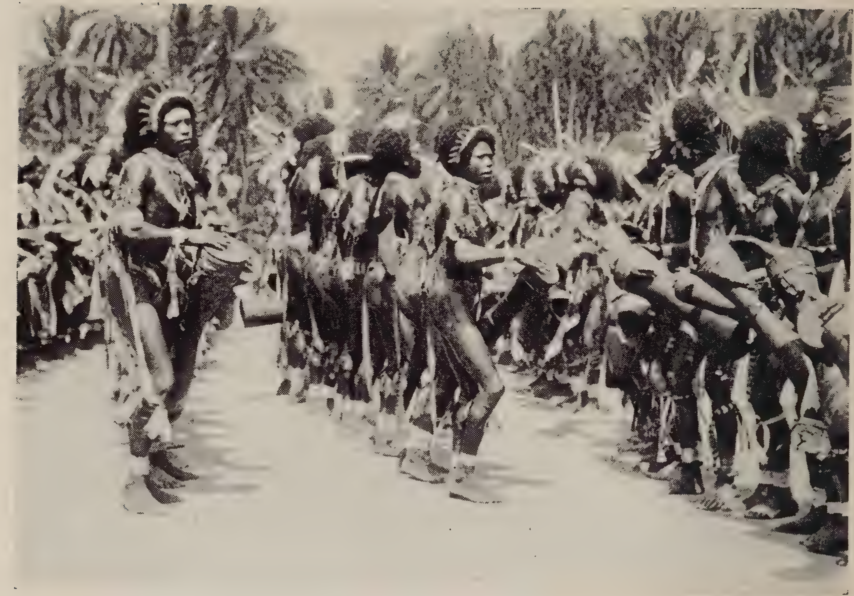
At first I felt a bit queer amongst this mob of crazy natives. But soon I realized that their glazed eyes were unaware of me. Boys I had marched with and lived with for weeks looked through me without a quiver of recognition. I pushed through the gathering of onlookers and set my little movie camera where I liked. I climbed to the platforms of houses or perched my tripod on shaky food racks. The hot dust of the village street burned



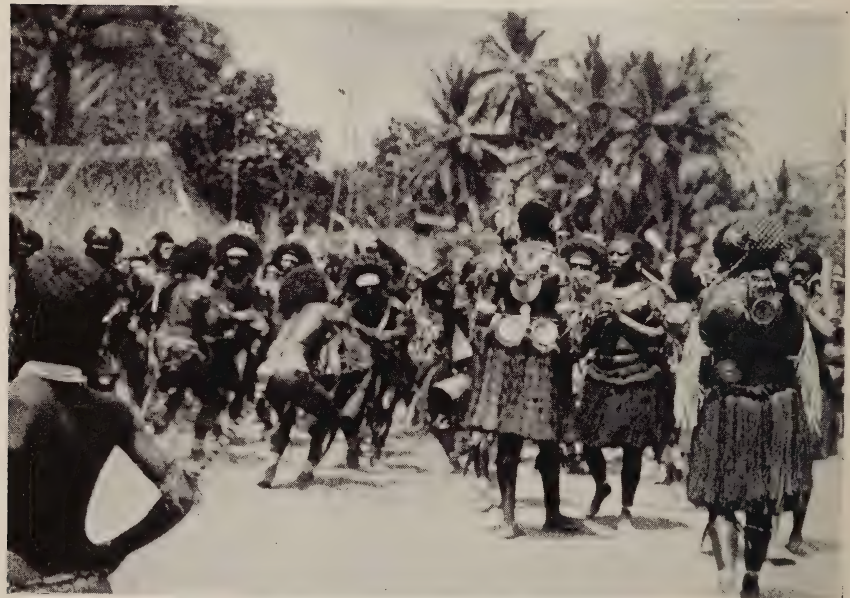
THE WOMEN'S DANCE COSTUMES ARE FANTASTIC AND ELABORATE.



A BRIEF PAUSE BETWEEN DANCE FIGURES.



A GRACEFUL DANCE FIGURE, EXECUTED IN PERFECT RHYTHM.

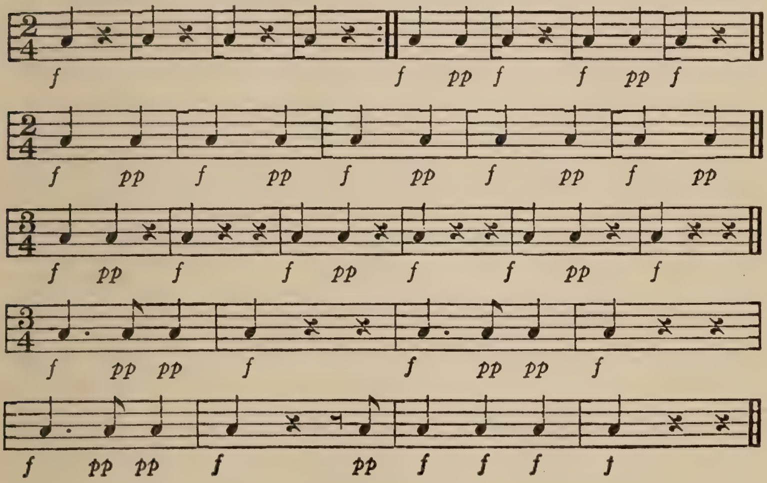


THE CLIMAX OF A DANCE PERIOD.

through the soles of my boots. I was drenched with perspiration.

The nature of the dancing surprised me. I had been prepared for mad gyrations, wild leaps and bounds. But there was nothing of this. Slow, dignified, essentially graceful, the dancers moved through their simple steps with marked restraint. Sometimes they sang as they danced—weird, monotonous chants, some of which are so ancient that their meanings have been lost.

The drum beats are simple and primitive but deeply stirring. I took the trouble to make note of several and my friend, Doctor Frank Damrosch, has been good enough to notate them for me:



I knew the dance would continue for three or four days and nights, without cessation, fresh performers taking the places of those who dropped out from exhaustion. But it would be only a repetition of what I had already seen, and the last of my film exposed, I prepared to leave. Koi, gone mad as completely as any of the others, had early deserted his post as official body-guard. As I searched for him, to help me home with my cameras, I came face to face with the Eboa boy who had been the hero of the elopement episode. He was in full dance regalia, drum and all, and I stopped him in his tracks while I photographed him.

The repentant Koi now appeared, and from him I learned that the young man's father had agreed to make full payment for the stolen bride, that all was forgiven, and that the lady herself was even then preparing for the dance. Negotiations were hastily made, and for the stiff price of a stick of tobacco each, I was privileged to photograph the bridal couple, as well as the sister of the bride.

Exhausted from the heat and the excitement, I left them dancing in the broiling sun and set out for Inawaia. In spite of the insistent booming of the distant drums, I slept that night. I had seen a dance.

Sunrise brought me down to earth again, with the impressions of that wonderful dance pushed into the background. For this was the day of our departure from Mekeo and we were faced with the problem of getting our collection down to the Jesubaiboa landing. An army was now required to carry it, for all of our proper cages, as well as many makeshifts, were filled. After a couple of hours of frenzied shouting and rushing about, we turned out no less than seventy-five men and boys of Jesubaiboa and Inawaia. The usual turmoil and quarrelling over loads followed, but the final result was our safe arrival at the river-bank.

Ducker's boys were above us, on the opposite side, loading a punt with the last of a big shipment of Angabunga Plantation's copra. I crossed by the outrigger ferry to make the arrangements for picking us up. As

I worked my way through the bush to Angabunga's landing, I heard a bedlam of roars and shouts from the Jesubaiboa side. It was a familiar sound. Ward was paying off the carriers. They were demanding a shilling each but they were getting two sticks of tobacco.

Well before noon, our birds atop the copra in the half-filled punt, covered with a tarpaulin against the sun, and the launch lashed alongside, we were off down the river. The water was high and the current carried us along so swiftly that the boat boys were hard pressed to keep us clear of the numerous sand banks. Two or three times, in the upper reaches, we grounded and came about so rapidly that we were in danger of capsizing, but each time we won clear again.

As we got into smoother, deeper waters farther down, I noticed along the banks, near the native banana plantations, several little semicircular pens, about three feet across, made of stout poles driven into the mud. These were crocodile guards, made to protect the women while drawing water. They were needed, for the Angabunga River is notorious for the size and ferocity of its crocodiles. Just before our arrival, a police boy, standing on the river bank just below Jesubaiboa landing, had been seized by a huge man-eater, which had rushed out at him. Others of the party had shot the reptile, as it struggled with its victim on the surface of the water, but too late to save the man's life.

We reached the mouth of the river just at the peak of high tide and passed over the bar without difficulty. There was a stiff wind, the water of Hall Sound was running high and the heavily loaded punt took a good deal over her bow. But our birds were well protected and reached the safety of Yule Island unharmed.

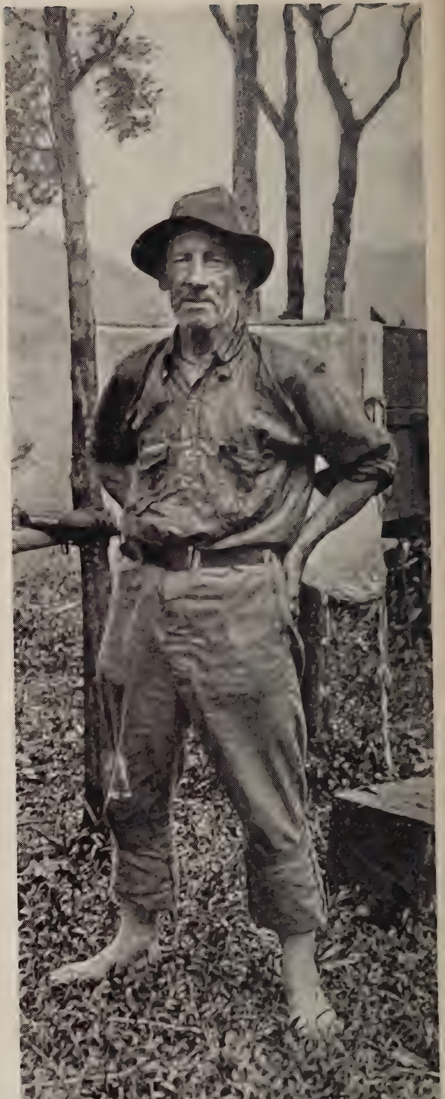
For four days, in the comfortable bungalow at Arure, the Angabunga Company's Yule Island station, we were the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Ducker. Then, on December 9, for the first time in seven years, the old *Morinda* came far enough into Hall Sound to anchor off Arure. The lure of Ducker's copra had brought her there. After a farewell to our hosts, and to Koi and Aya, who had come down with us, we were off in a punt. As the last snort of the ship's winch dropped us on the deck with the final load of birds, I felt the relief of journey's end. I had no regret, for so much had happened in the short span of two months! We had only to sit tight, look after our birds and presently we should arrive, quite comfortably, in Sydney. There was turkey for dinner that night.

We spent the next day in Port Moresby, making our official adieus, settling accounts with Burns-Philp's store, and exhibiting our fine collection with pride. The *Morinda* sailed that night for Samarai, at the extreme eastern end of the Territory. With our birds safely stored aft, on the little poop-deck, a comfortable cabin for ourselves nearby and an accommodating steward to bring us ample meals, we were on top of the world. At least we thought we were, until about seven next morning, when there came a grinding shudder and the engines stopped. Rushing to the rail, we found the ship was hard and fast on a sharp-toothed coral reef. The propellers were reversed, in a frantic effort to back her off as she had come in. It was no use. We were on to stay.

At first, we felt we were in no particular danger, but soon the southeast trade wind stiffened, and as we were outside the protection of the barrier reef, we took the heavy seas full on our beam. The ship pounded heavily on the hard coral. The vibration was terrific and our cages could hardly be kept in position; their occupants were being badly shaken up. Food and water dishes slid

MEKEO TRACK.

THE AUTHOR.



JOHN E. WARD, MAINSTAY OF THE EXPEDITION.

crazily to and fro. But we could only stand by and hope that we should be taken off before something worse happened.

After two days of apprehension the ship's wireless brought out from Samarai a schooner of two hundred tons. She had come to take off the *Morinda's* passengers. Until almost the last minute, we expected to go along as well, but then we learned that while we were welcome, there was no room for our birds. Arguments were of no avail. We watched the little vessel set sail for Samarai, leaving us behind.

An unforeseen danger now appeared. The constant pounding had loosened the plates of the ship's bottom and salt water had seeped into our main fresh-water tanks. A hasty check showed that the only undamaged supply was in a small compartment in the after end of the ship, directly under our quarters. The departure of our fellow passengers reduced the demands on this scanty store but it was evident that within a very few days, in spite of the strictest economy, we should be out of drinking water.

Four more anxious days followed. We lived in dread that a storm of severe intensity would occur, for we should have broken up in no time. Occasionally, the wind would slacken for a brief interval and then it was easy to imagine that, under happier circumstances, there might be worse places to be stuck on than a tropical reef. The water was crystal clear, so that we could easily distinguish corals, pink, blue and violet, on the bottom, fifteen feet or more below the surface. Dotted everywhere were small, broad-bodied fishes, of an indigo blue so intense that they seemed to be projected out of their element. Sometimes a huge devil fish or giant manta would float by, its curved horns blazing with reflected light, the waves breaking over its wide-spread wings. Once one leaped clear of the water, dropping back with a crash that threw spray high into the air. Many sharks, great, evil-looking fellows, circled the ship, waiting for any choice bits that might come from the galley.

On the sixth day of bouncing about on the reef, the smoke-belching funnels of a large steamer appeared on the horizon. We watched anxiously and as her hull loomed, our friend the bo'sun recognized her as the *Montoro,* coming to our relief from Rabaul, on the island of New Britain. She worked her way in as close as she dared and cast anchor. To us, she seemed huge—she really was more than twice as large as the *Morinda.* After a long battle with the waves, she got a line to us and tried hard to pull us off, aided by our own power. But it was hopeless; the coral would not loose its grip on our bottom.

Realizing, at last, the futility of her efforts, the *Montoro,* by a loud blast of her whistle, announced her intention of leaving. Horrified at the prospect of being left behind, Ward rushed up to the bridge and appealed to Captain "Taffy" Williams, an old friend. There was a hasty exchange of signals and the *Montoro* agreed to wait. After much scurrying about and a hasty manning of the winches, we got Ward and half the birds into a launch, handled by two Port Moresby boat boys. They must have misunderstood orders, for they set out straight for the distant shore, whereas the *Montoro* lay well outside us. Ward was busy righting cages that had been dropped in helter-skelter, and the noise of the launch's motor prevented her crew from hearing our frantic yells. They must have gone nearly a mile in the wrong direction before Ward looked up. When he did, he let go a torrent of oaths that we could hear as plainly as though we were aboard the launch. The frightened boys then struck out to sea on a long tack and the little boat was hardly more than a speck when they finally came about. I reached the *Montoro* with the second load just as Ward arrived; he was still pale with rage.

It was heart-breaking to see our precious birds dumped topsy-turvy on the deck—cages upside down, wooden slides smashed, dishes flying. But soon we had them snugly stacked in the 'tween-decks, none the worse for their shaking up. When the birds had been made comfortable, we went up to the smoking room and two handsome specimens we were. We demanded food, and the outraged steward called a boy to fetch tea and sandwiches for "these two men."

Perhaps I ought to finish the *Morinda's* story by saying that two weeks later she was hauled clear by a salvage crew and actually sailed down to Sydney. She had to ride on her tank tops or false bottom, since her outer shell had been almost completely stove in. Three months in dry dock and she was back on her run, staunch and sound as ever.

We reached Sydney in the heat of a southern Christmas Day. In spite of hard knocks, near-starvation and shipwreck, the birds were in top form; we had not lost a feather. Ward, generous to the end, insisted on removing his own birds to the Zoo at Taronga Park and giving our collection the full run of his aviaries. Here our birds enjoyed rest and freedom for nearly six weeks, while I waited for a suitable ship for New York, via Panama. Ward and I made good use of the time, building roomy cages for the long voyage, and gathering such Australian birds and mammals as were to be had.

One morning our finest cock blue bird of paradise managed to escape from a temporary cage in which he had been enjoying a sun-bath. We saw him go and followed as long as we could but he soon eluded us. Constant search and promise of reward failed to find a trace of him and we gave him up for lost. But four days later, as I was working in the aviary, I looked up at a sudden flutter of wings and there was our beauty, trying his best to get through the wire! At my first move, he disappeared, but I knew that, once having found the place, he would return. Ward rigged an old parrot cage, baited with a banana, a pull-string on the open door. In less than an hour the prodigal was back in his own box, making up for four days of short rations.

On a day in early February, when the steamer *Canadian Cruiser* passed out through Sydney Heads, her burlap-lined smoking room housed forty birds of paradise, as well as some two hundred other feathered creatures. In comfortable cabins, one on either side, were myself and Ernest Ward, now substituting for his father, who felt unequal to the trip. The homeward journey was a long grind of ceaseless vigilance, with a stop at Panama the only break in its monotony.

It was late in March when the *Canadian Cruiser*, forty-four days out of Sydney, nosed her way to her berth in Gowanus Creek, South Brooklyn. In her smoking room were forty birds of paradise, alive and happy, with two hundred lesser relatives. Also, two proud but weary attendants, to whom the unsavory odors of Gowanus Creek seemed strangely sweet.

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